COURT PAINTING
IN RAJASTHAN

edited by ANDREW TOPSFIELD

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COURT PAINTING
IN RAJASTHAN

From the seventeenth to nineteenth century the patronage of the Rajput rulers of Rajasthan gave rise to a rich profusion of distinctive painting styles, devoted both to the illustration of poetical and religious themes and to royal portraiture and the depiction of court life. Major courts such as Udaipur (Mewar), Bundi and Kota in southeastern Rajasthan, Jodhpur and Bikaner in the west, Amber (Jaipur) and Kishangarh in the northeast, as well as a number of *thikanas* or courts of the minor nobility, all supported diverse and constantly developing styles, whose broad expressive range encompasses the naturalistic refinement of Mughal and Deccani art as well as vividly robust idioms deriving from the widespread Early Rajput style of the sixteenth century and the folk painting traditions of the region which still endure..

The contributors to this book explore various topics of recent research which throw new light on the major (and some minor) Rajasthani schools of painting. The articles by Joachim Bautze and Asok Das survey longer or shorter periods of painting at Bundi, Kota, and Amber, and bring to the fore the evidence of early palace wall-paintings which still survive. Andrew Topsfield and J.P. Losty focus on individual illustrated manuscripts, religious and secular, from seventeenth-century Udaipur and eighteenth-century Uniara, while Debra Diamond considers an unusual group of yogic manuscripts from nineteenth-century Jodhpur. Catherine Glynn explores the influence of Deccani themes at Bikaner, and Rosemary Crill the tradition of court portraiture at Ghanerao. Navina Haidar highlights some bizarrely humorous elements in eighteenth-century Kishangarh painting, while Naval Krishna's genealogical study of Bikaner artist families demonstrates the continuing value of archival research in illuminating the lives of those little known figures, the court painters themselves.

Initiated by the pioneering scholar A.K. Coomaraswamy and a few other early writers, the study of Rajasthani court painting could be said to have come to maturity in 1950. In that year *Marg* published Karl Khandalavala's ground-breaking article "Leaves from Rajasthan". The present volume is offered in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of its subject.

Cover: Prince Sagat Singh by a lotus pool.
Udaipur, circa 1750. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

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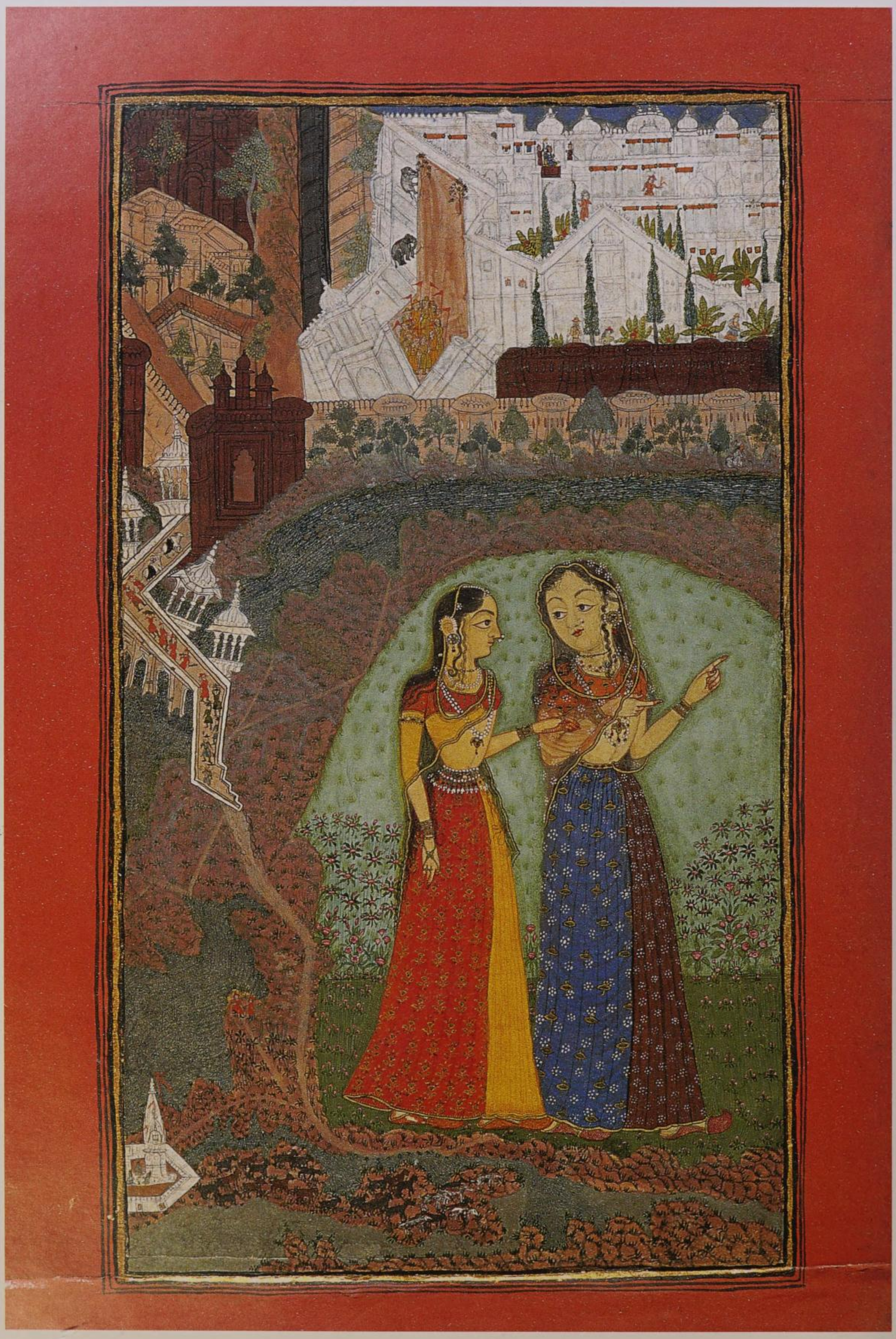
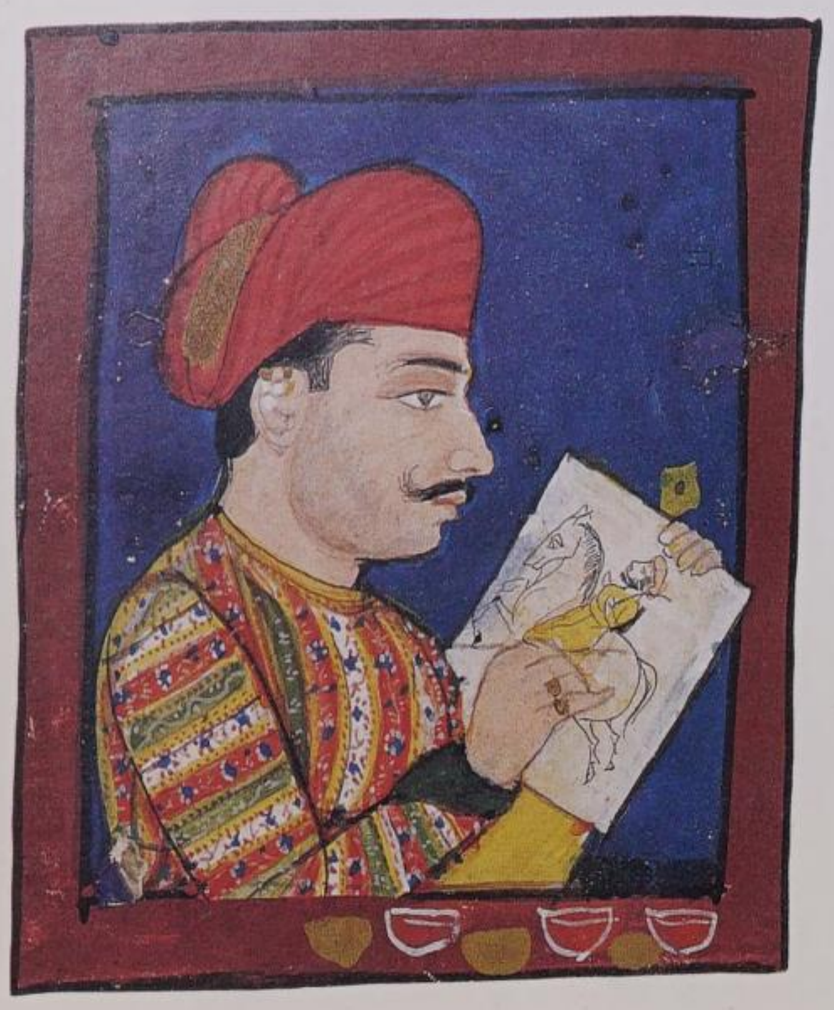
The Editor wishes to dedicate this volume to the memory of
Kumar Sangram Singh of Nawalgarh,
who knew Rajasthani painting better than anyone and
was always generous with his knowledge.





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page i: Gajalakshmi. Raghogarh(?), early eighteenth century. British Museum, London.
page ii: Two ladies in a landscape. By Incha Ram. Dungarpur (?), circa 1725. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.
page iv: The artist Pyar Chand, self-portrait. Detail from a painting of Maharaja Raj Singh of Sitamau in a palace courtyard. Sitamau, 1835. Private collection, England. Photograph: Ashmolean Museum.
pages vi-vii: Maharana Sarup Singh receiving Sir Henry Lawrence in darbar. By Tara. Udaipur, 1855. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.

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Sketch-map of Rajasthan

RAJASTHANI PAINTING: ITS STUDY AND SCOPE

Andrew Topsfield

The Study of Rajasthani Painting

Initiated by the great pioneering scholar A.K. Coomaraswamy (1877–1947) and a few other early writers, the study of Rajasthani court painting could be said to have come to maturity in 1950. The present collection of articles – though it can touch on only a few aspects of recent research – is therefore offered in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of its subject.

In 1950 three important publications appeared. One, in the then still youthful journal *Marg*, was Karl Khandalavala's ground-breaking article "Leaves from Rajasthan".[1] A study of the Mewar *Bhagavata Purana* manuscript of 1648, it also explored the early development of the Rajasthani schools, whose individual local characteristics only become clear from the seventeenth century onwards. In the same year, a survey of Indian painting by Basil Gray appeared in *The Art of India and Pakistan*, the commemorative catalogue of the Royal Academy exhibition held in London in 1947–48. Many of the Rajasthani pictures on show had been loaned from princely collections, allowing royal portraits and court scenes in particular to be seen for the first time by a wider audience. Also in 1950, Hermann Goetz's monograph *The Art and Architecture of Bikaner State* was published. It included the first detailed account of Bikaner painting, based on Goetz's privileged study of the former Lalgarh Palace collection.

The 1950s and '60s saw a further stream of articles and studies of the Rajasthani and related Central Indian schools, by Goetz, Khandalavala, G.K. Kanoria, Moti Chandra, Pramod Chandra, Anand Krishna, Kumar Sangram Singh of Nawalgarh, and others. Several influential exhibitions of private collections were also held in India, Britain, and America: particularly those of the Kanoria collection, catalogued by W.G. Archer (1957); of the Khajanchi collection, catalogued by Khandalavala and others (1960); of several American collections in the exhibition *Gods, Thrones and Peacocks*, catalogued by Stuart Cary Welch and Milo Beach (1965); and of the Edwin Binney 3rd collection, catalogued by Binney and Archer (1968).[2] However, it must be said that the efforts of these writers and their more recent successors have never kept pace with the sheer volume of material that had passed through the art market by the 1970s and early '80s, as a result of the gradual dispersal of the old royal collections which had begun soon after Independence.

For the scholar this dispersal has been a mixed blessing. Many thousands of paintings formerly locked away in palace storerooms have become more accessible. At the same time much knowledge has been lost through the sudden scattering of unrecorded ancestral collections. As will be seen from the articles in this volume, scholars must now piece together

their subject matter from a multitude of public and private collections in India and throughout the world, even though substantial residues of the royal collections (as well as wall-paintings which still survive *in situ*) remain in the palaces, museums, and libraries of Rajasthan.

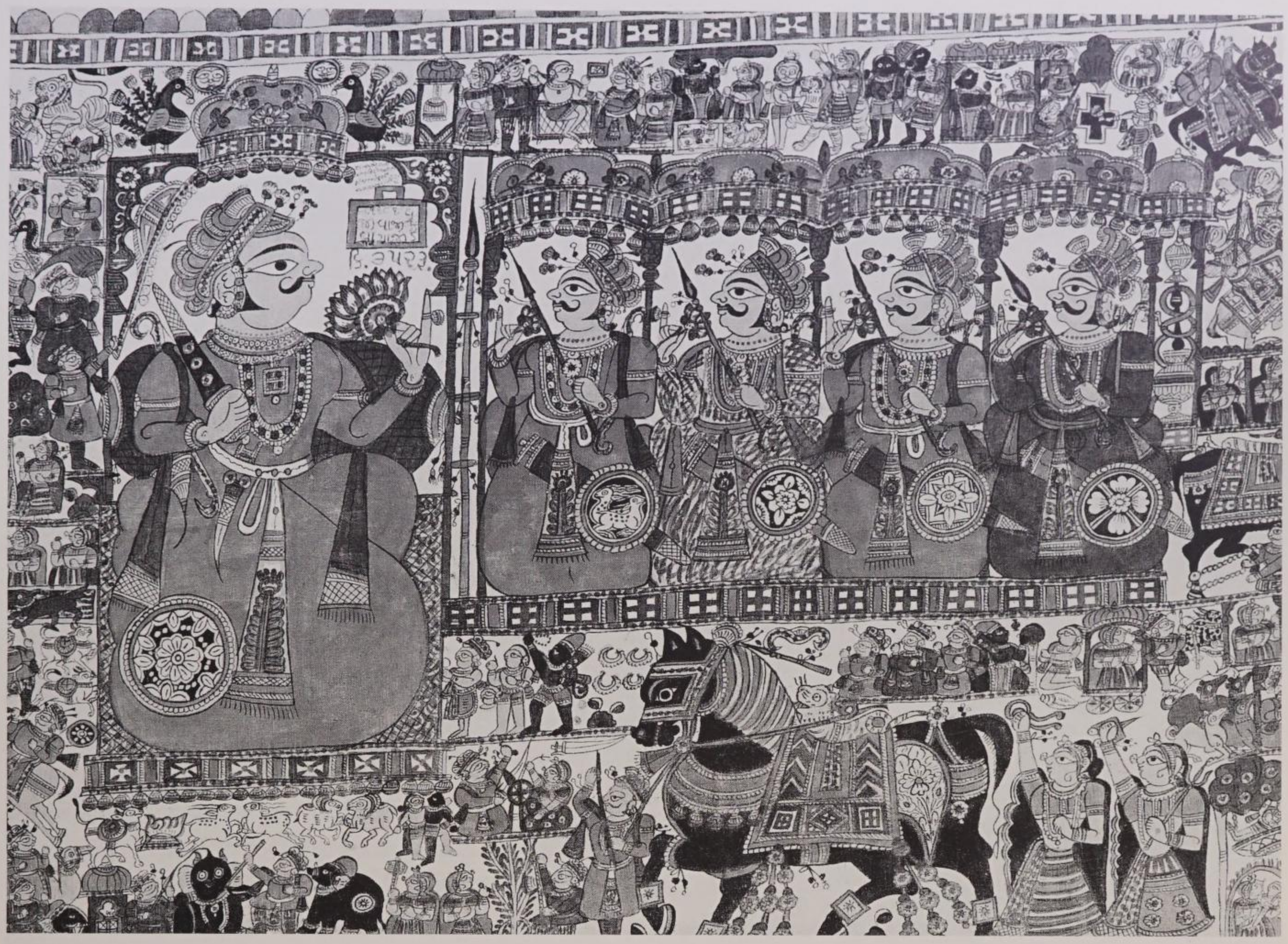
A fifty-year report on the state of the subject would have to conclude that a huge amount of work still needs to be done. In contrast to Mughal painting – and, to some extent, Rajput painting in the Punjab Hills (the Pahari schools of the Western Himalaya) – the Rajasthani schools have arguably attracted less scholarly study than is their due. Adequate surveys of both major and minor centres of painting remain thin on the ground. Further archival work in the state records held at Bikaner and elsewhere would also be profitable, since contemporary court *bahi* records should eventually provide a more detailed knowledge of the artistic patronage of the Rajput nobility and of the lives of those little known figures, the painters themselves.

A full survey of Rajasthani painting lies far beyond the scope of the present volume. Its aim is instead to present selected topics of recent research, throwing new light on the documentation or analysis of the main Rajasthani schools and their social, historical, and religious background. The contributions by Joachim Bautze and Asok Das survey longer or shorter periods of painting at Bundi and Kota, and Amber respectively, and serve to bring to the fore the often overlooked evidence of the early palace wall-paintings which still survive. Andrew Topsfield and J.P. Losty focus more closely on individual illustrated manuscripts, religious and secular, from seventeenth-century Udaipur and eighteenth-century Uniara, while Debra Diamond considers a remarkable group of yogic manuscripts from nineteenth-century Jodhpur. Catherine Glynn explores the influence of Bijapur themes at Bikaner, and Rosemary Crill the tradition of portraiture at the *thikana* of Ghanerao. Navina Haidar highlights the bizarrely humorous streak in eighteenth-century Kishangarh painting, contrasting with the better known romantic idylls of Krishna and Radha from that school. The essay by Naval Krishna demonstrates the continuing value of archival research in establishing the genealogies of court painters.

The Scope of Rajasthani Painting

Painting under Rajput patronage in Rajasthan reveals a stylistic diversity perhaps even greater than that of Rajput painting in the Punjab Hills. At the same time it has an underlying unity of character, such that a Rajasthani picture is seldom to be confused with a Pahari one. The nature of this underlying character, beneath the multiplicity of styles, periods, and influences, is hard to define. But the traveller to the ancient cities and forts of Rajasthan and the hills, plains, jungles, and deserts that lie between them may feel that it has much to do with the particular spirit of place of each court and kingdom. Light and landscape, flora and fauna, as well as local architectural forms and the prevailing religious, literary, and musical culture, buttressed by Rajput traditionalism and a hierarchical social order, all helped to condition the pictorial idioms of the courts. It has been remarked that the subtle ochres, browns, and other modulated shades in Marwar painting correspond with the colouring and ethos of that desert region, in contrast to the brighter, less adulterated palette of more temperate regions east of the Aravalli hills such as Mewar and Bundi.

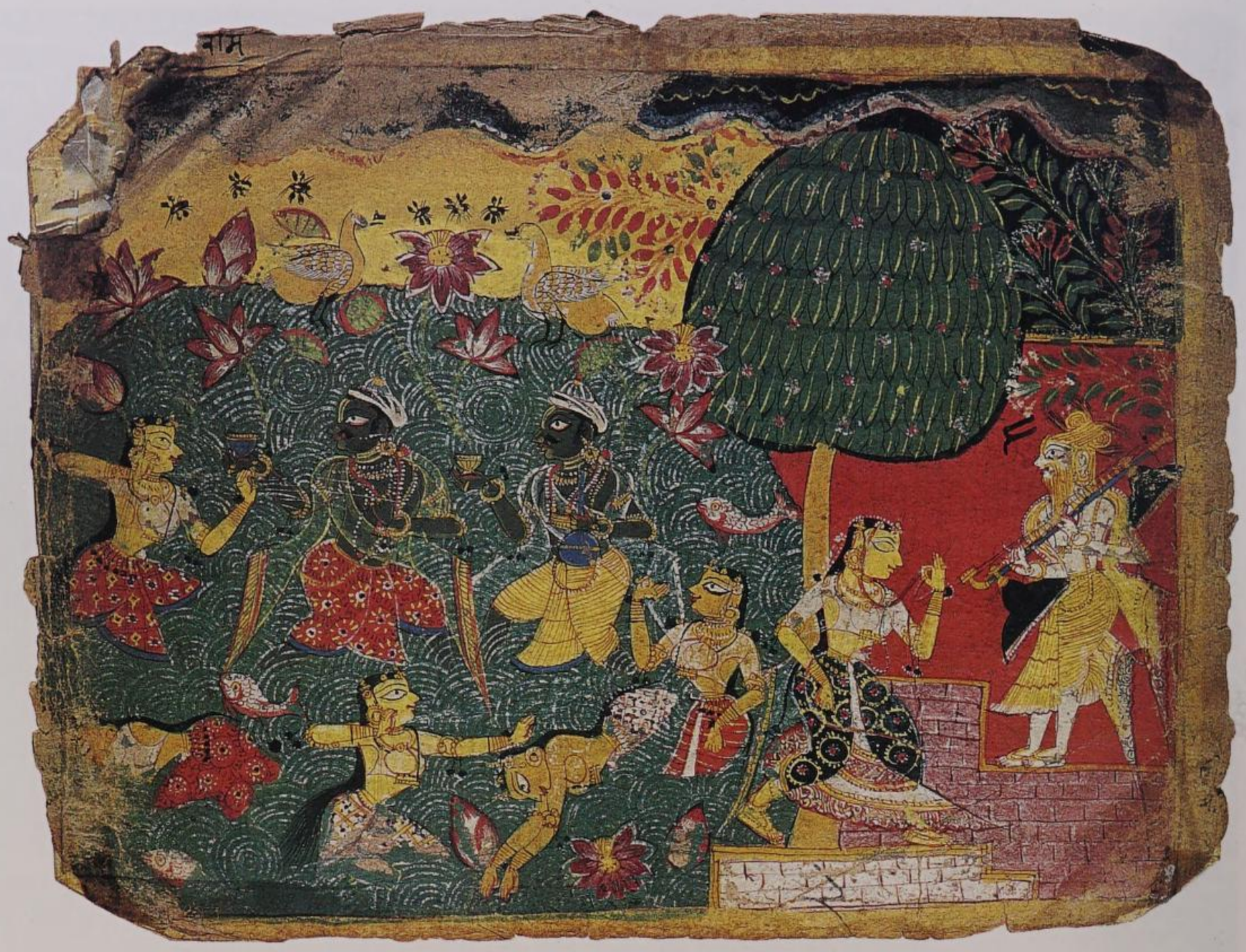
In a crude way, it is possible to place individual Rajasthani styles within a wide, continuous spectrum ranging from indigenous folk art, with its bold linear forms and rhythmical vitality, to the highly refined and partly European-influenced naturalism of imperial Mughal art.[3] At any court there could



be a wide fluctuation between these poles from one generation to the next, as royal contacts with Mughal centres (or with the Deccan) perhaps grew or diminished. Generally the traditional local artist would find a happy medium of his choosing, taking as much as he needed from foreign portrait or other genre models and adapting them with a sure eye to his own more poetical or heroic ideals.

The folk base of Rajasthani painting is still seen today (though not untinged by old court styles) in specialized forms such as the Pabuji *par*, a long narrative cloth-painting used by traditional bards in their recitations of the epic of the hero-god of that name. A recent example (figure 1) shows the typical simplification of outline, colour, and composition, the rhythmical repetition of figures, the shifting, hierarchical scale, and conceptual treatment of spatial relations and temporal phases of the action. In a less drily formulaic way, something of the same aesthetic – most obviously, the enlarged and elongated human eye – can be seen in a vigorous and expressive Early Rajput manuscript of the sixteenth century, illustrating the tenth book of the *Bhagavata Purana* which narrates the early life of Krishna. The freshness and brio of this now dispersed manuscript, which could conceivably have been produced at the Sisodia court of Chitor under Rana Sanga of Mewar (1509–27), is seen in an illustration of the amorous sports of the drunken *yaksha*s Nalakubara and Manigriva (figure 2). Their lewd frolics with maidens in the waters of the

1
Detail (central panel) of a Pabuji *par*, a painting on cloth illustrating the epic of the folk-god Pabuji. Painted by Nandkishor Joshi for the *bhopa* (bard) Chotuji. Bhilwara, Mewar, 1983. Size (of whole *par*) 147 x 515 cm. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.



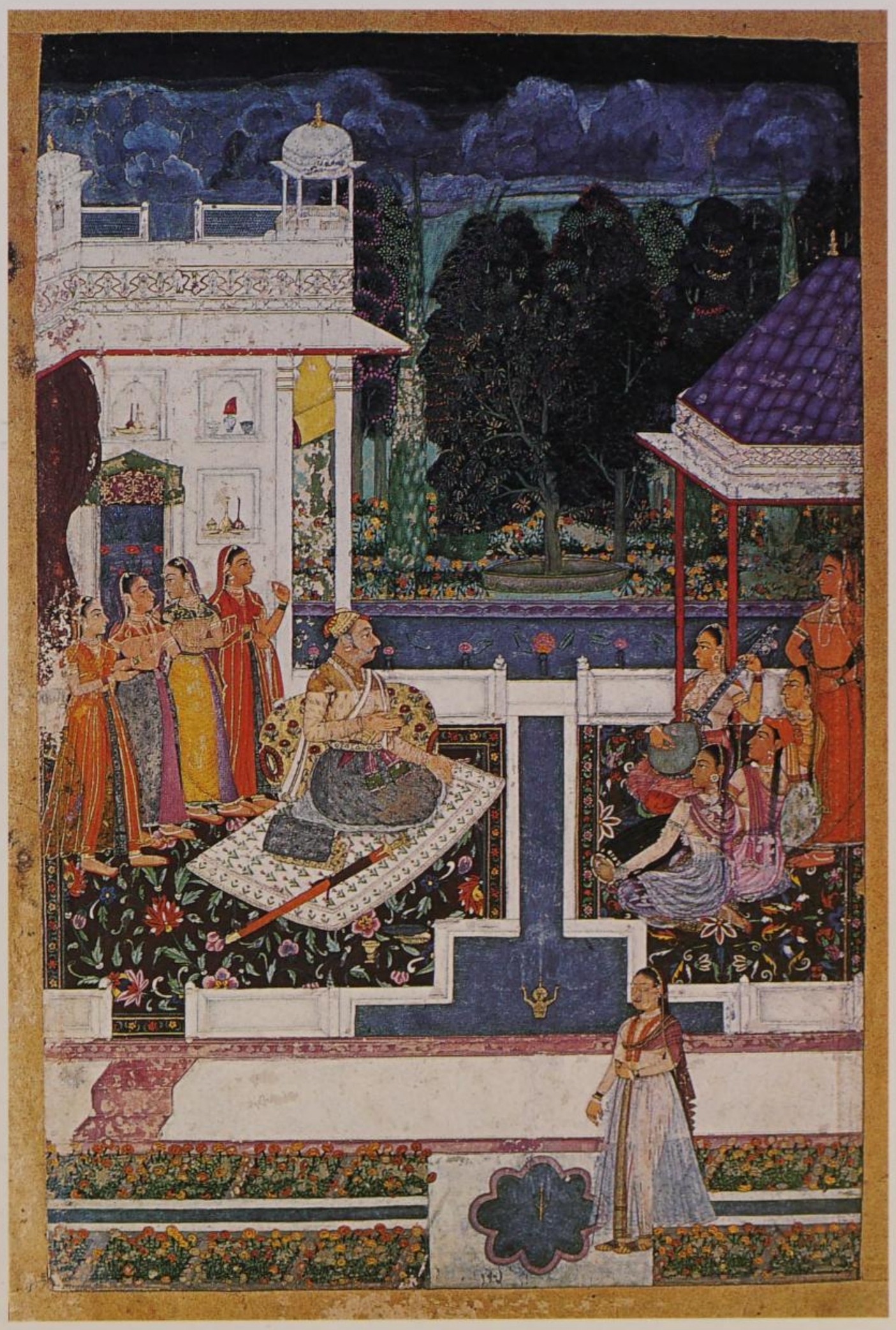
2
The intoxicated Nalakubara and Manigriva frolic with maidens. Illustration to a dispersed *Bhagavata Purana* series. Early Rajput style, possibly in Mewar, circa 1525. Gouache on paper; approximately 18 x 23 cm. Gursharan and Elvira Sidhu collection, California. Photograph: A. Topsfield.

3
Todi *ragini*. By Virji. Pali, Marwar, 1623. Gouache on paper; 14.6 x 20.4 cm. Kumar Sangram Singh of Nawalgarh family collection, Jaipur. Photograph: R. Skelton.

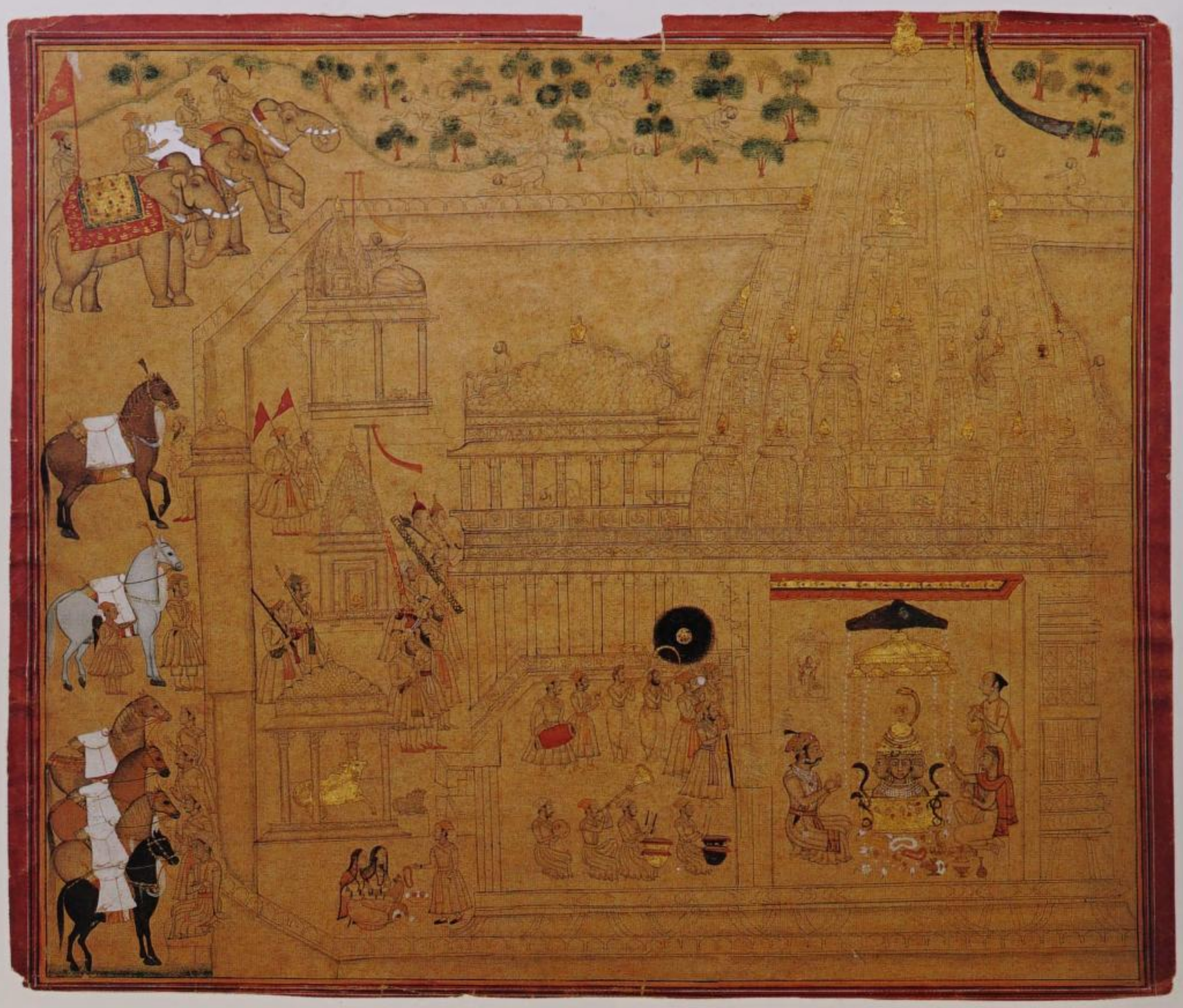
heavenly Ganga, like "a pair of elephants with their she-elephants", caused the holy sage Narada to curse them. This scene is shown decorously yet with gusto by the anonymous master-painter, against a background of stylized water forms with thick, fleshy lotuses and fish, geese, and bees. Both in style and in its strong narrative thrust this ambitious series underlies the achievements of Rajasthani artists of the following century, such as Sahibdin of Udaipur or the early Bundi masters in their interpretations of poetical or mythological texts.

Also close to the folkish end of the spectrum is a charming series of *ragamala*, or illustrations to musical modes, painted by the artist Virji at Pali in southern Marwar in 1623 (figure 3). The *ragini* Todi is represented as a lady playing the vina in a forest and attracting the wild deer with her music. The rapport between the dreamy-eyed musician and the enraptured blackbuck is conveyed with strong simplicity. It is a long way from this indigenous, rustic Marwar style to the polished court portraits of Maharaja Jaswant Singh of Jodhpur (r. 1638–78) a generation later (figure 4). Jaswant Singh like other Rajput chiefs of the time spent much of his life in the Mughal service, attending the Emperor's court or campaigning in distant provinces. He would thus have adopted Mughal fashions of various kinds, including a taste for portraiture and the depiction of court life. Here the Raja listens to female musicians performing on a carpeted garden terrace with water-courses and fountains. In subject, setting, and treatment the painting is strongly Mughal in character, yet it already departs from imperial norms in the schematic geometry of pavilion and garden, the increasing profusion of detail and colour accents, and the evocative background with clustered flowering trees under heavy rain-clouds.

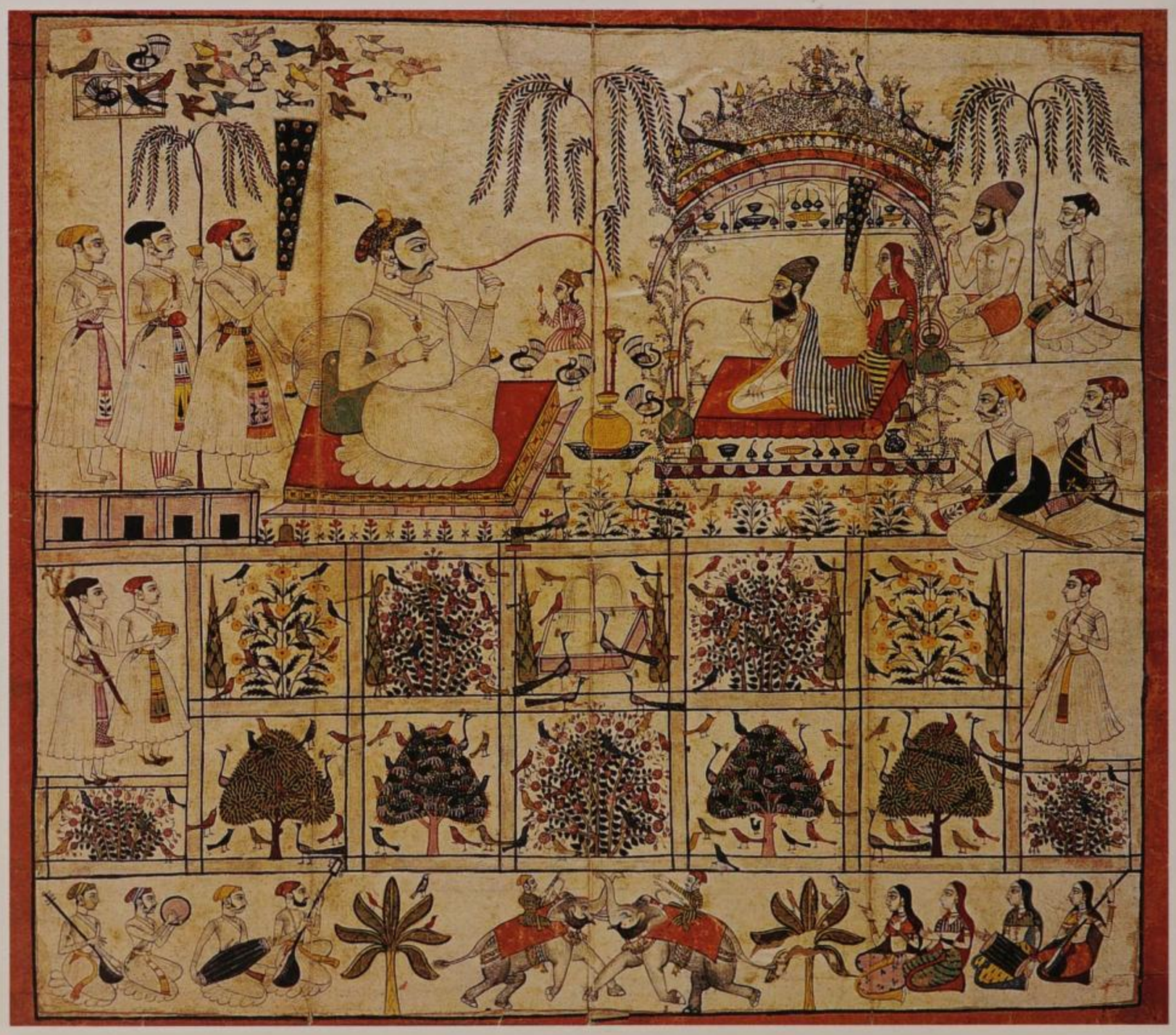
A more advanced assimilation of Mughal-style court reportage is seen in a painting of Maharana Amar Singh II (r. 1698–1710) at worship at the temple of Shiva Eklingji, the tutelary deity of the Mewar kingdom (figure 5). It is executed in the spare, partly coloured grisaille style which is often found in Amar Singh's reign. The Rana appears with a priest and acolyte in the temple's inner shrine, which the artist has revealed by opening up the wall in a conceptual manner. The composition itself rests on a schematic but lucid simplification of the Eklingji temple complex. To the left, in a reduced scale, temple and court musicians play in the courtyard, while further attendants and



4
Maharaja Jaswant Singh and ladies listening to music on a garden terrace. Jodhpur, circa 1660. Gouache on paper; 26.5 x 17.3 cm. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Photograph: R. Skelton.



5
Maharana Amar Singh II of Mewar visiting the temple of Eklingji. Udaipur, circa 1705. Partly coloured brush drawing with gold and silver on paper; 48 x 55 cm. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.



6
Maharaja Raj Singh receiving a holy man in a garden. Sawar, 1714. Gouache on paper; 48 x 53 cm. Sir Howard Hodgkin collection, London. Photograph courtesy Sir Howard Hodgkin.

7
A line of dancing gopis. Kishangarh, early eighteenth century. Gouache on cloth; 185 x 167 cm. Sir Howard Hodgkin collection, London. Photograph courtesy Sir Howard Hodgkin.

8
Raj Singh of Junia taking wine in a garden· (detail). Attributed to Chand. Junia, circa 1700. Gouache on paper. Kumar Sangram Singh of Nawalgarh family collection, Jaipur. Photograph: R. Skelton.

9
Hunters trapping a wild elephant. Kota, circa 1745. Gouache and gold on paper; 46.3 x 52.1 cm. Sir Howard Hodgkin collection, London. Photograph: Ashmolean Museum.

grooms with the elephants and horses wait in the outer precincts. In contrast to the static formality of the human figures are the lively monkeys, sketched by the artist on the temple roof and in the stylized wood beyond.

Many of the best integrated and most effective Rajasthani paintings, showing still more strongly developed formal and decorative tendencies, come from minor courts and outlying *thikana*s (quasi-baronial fiefs), where indigenous traditions remained stronger and where the lone court painter could develop his personal style unfettered by the conformity to a studio norm which was often required at the larger courts. In a painting of a Sisodia chief, Raj Singh of Sawar in the Ajmer region, the Raja receives a holy man in a formal garden whose near-symmetrical rectangular plots burst with flowering trees, peacocks, and multicoloured birds (figure 6). The dignity of a court occasion combines with the exuberance of the garden setting. Related to this, but lusher and more refined, is a large painting on cloth of the *pichhavai* or temple-hanging type, depicting a dancing line of *gopi*s, who attend Krishna (here absent) on the left (figure 7). These exquisite young women linking hands beside a stream with fish, waterfowl, and lotuses are a Rajput adaptation of a Mughal female type, attributable to the court of Kishangarh, near Ajmer. Of the same period and region is a portrait of another Raj Singh, from the small court of Junia, who is depicted by his artist Chand drinking wine in a flowering garden, in a convention deriving from Mughal painting by way of the Marwar school (figure 8). Again the subject has been transformed by the imposing size of the original, the strong outline drawing, symmetry and scale of the human figures, and the profusion of blossoms, sprays, and shrubs.

Although during the first half of the eighteenth century Mughal political power was waning, imperial models continued to be received and reinterpreted by artists in Rajasthan, often with individualistic results, ranging from restless dynamism to elegant minimalism. The former tendency is seen in the extraordinary hunting scenes and elephant fights from the Hara Rajput court of Kota. In "Hunters trapping a wild elephant" (figure 9), a mighty bull elephant is seen – as so often in Rajput narrative pictures – severally, in continuous action: charging from the bamboo thickets fringing the lake where his herd is bathing; confronting the camouflaged hunters on their trained elephants; and, at last, fastened with ropes, being driven to a tree where a hunter waits in the branches to secure him. In

10
Maharaja Sawai Madho Singh playing chess. Jaipur, circa 1760. Gouache on paper; 34.3 x 24.1 cm. Private collection, USA. Photograph: R. Skelton.

this inspired picture, animals, vegetation, rocks, and water are charged with a tumultuous energy which is lacking in its charming but sedate Mughal precursors. In contrast, a Jaipur painting of a few years later shows Maharaja Madho Singh reclining grandly on a bed and whiling away the hot hours with a game of chess played (no doubt victoriously) against three kneeling courtiers, while an attendant massages the royal foot and another pulls at the punkah overhead (figure 10). The soothing cool whites and pale greys of the interior, deriving from Mughal painting under Muhammad Shah, are disposed in a pattern of formal rectangles, offset by the diagonals of bed and chessboard and the thin line of the punkah rope. Within this sparely delineated, neutral interior there is a subtle observation of the relationship between the dominant figure of the Raja and his subservient ring of opponents and attendants.

The court painter was himself, with few exceptions, an artisan of low status in court society, and his dealings with his royal patron would have been constrained by formality and protocol. Even so, it seems that in the nature of things a stronger sympathy, verging at times on intimacy, developed between some of the more gifted artists and their appreciative masters. This combination of respectful distance and unspoken rapport between artist and patron is well evoked in a nineteenth-century painting from the court of Sitamau in central India, just over the Rajasthan border (figure 11). While the local Rathor chief Raj Singh – aged 50, the inscription says – stands as the central figure in his palace courtyard attended by younger relatives and courtiers, the artist Pyar Chand[4] has unusually also shown himself at an upper window, colourfully dressed and with his paints before him, sketching an equestrian study of his master.

Pyar Chand belonged to the last generation of court painters to be largely unaffected by European pictorial models, whose influence grew in the nineteenth century along with British power over the Rajput states. At many courts after 1850 painting was either in decline or fighting a rearguard action against the novel and seductive challenge of photography. At Jaipur Maharaja Sawai Ram Singh (1835–80) himself became a prolific photographer. Towards the end of the century, an artist such as Mohan Lal (figure 12) had no alternative but to convert – and triumphantly subvert – the conventions of Western studio photography in his group portrait of Maharaja Madho Singh II with one of his Thakurs. Set within a proscenium arch, the palatial interior includes European pediments, fan-lights, bracket-lamps, and wall-mirrors as well as Indian *jali* balconies, *khas* grass screens, and bright green paintwork contrasting with the terracotta walls. The noblemen are ranged on either side of a tripod table with an ornate table-clock, with a truly flamboyant carpet before them. With such resonantly hybrid works traditional painting ended at many courts. At Udaipur, the most splendidly conservative court of all, painting continued virtually until Independence, when princely power was abolished and artistic patronage ceased.

11
Maharaja Raj Singh of Sitamau in a palace courtyard. By Pyar Chand (depicted at left upper window; see page iv for detail). Sitamau, 1835. Gouache on paper; 29.3 x 43.0 cm. Private collection, England. Photograph: Ashmolean Museum.

NOTES

1. K. Khandalavala, "Leaves from Rajasthan: A dated *Bhagavata Purana* of the Bhandarkar Oriental Institute, Poona, and notes on the chronology of early Rajput painting", *Marg*, IV, 3, 1950, pp. 2-24, 49-56.

2. W.G. Archer, *Indian Paintings from Rajasthan*, London, 1957; K. Khandalavala, M. Chandra, and P. Chandra, *Miniature Painting: A Catalogue of the Exhibition of the Sri Motichand Khajanchi Collection*, New Delhi, 1960; S.C. Welch and M.C. Beach, *Gods, Thrones and Peacocks*, New York, 1965; W.G. Archer and E. Binney 3rd, *Rajput Miniatures from the Collection of Edwin Binney 3rd*, Portland, Or., 1968. Sherman Lee's catalogue *Rajput Painting*, New York, 1960, also broke new ground, and at Jaipur exhibitions were held of *Rajasthani Paintings* (Rajasthan Lalit Kala Akademi, 1957) and *Indian Miniature Painting: Collection of Kumar Sangram Singh of Nawalgarh* (catalogue by Kumar Sangram Singh, cyclostyle, 1965).

3. For a general discussion see M.C. Beach, "The context of Rajput painting", *Ars Orientalis*, X, 1975, pp. 11-17; also idem, *Mughal and Rajput Painting*, The New Cambridge History of India, vol. I:3, Cambridge, 1992.

4. See D.J. Ehnbom, *Indian Miniatures: The Ehrenfeld Collection*, New York, 1985, nos. 80-81, for other works by Pyar Chand. For Raj Singh of Sitamau, "an able ruler...noted for his philanthropy and charity", see C.E. Luard, *Western States (Malwa) Gazetteer*, vol. V, part A, Bombay, 1908, pp. 322-24; I am indebted to Robert Skelton for this reference.

12
Maharaja Sawai Madho Singh II and Rupshahji Dev Bahadur with companions and attendants in an ornate interior. By Mohan Lal. Jaipur, circa 1890. Gouache with metal foil on cloth; 75 x 89 cm. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

EARLY PAINTING AT BUNDI

Joachim K. Bautze

The principalities of Bundi and Kota constituted Harauti or Haravati, "the country of the Haras", the most important branch of the Chauhan dynasty. Painting at Bundi already existed in the fifteenth century. Its style, however, was so close to the Western Indian style favoured by the Jain community that it can hardly be called "Bundi" as such.

After Rao Surjan Hara of Bundi (r. 1554–85) had accepted Mughal suzerainty in March 1569, following Akbar's siege of Ranthambhor, a strong Mughal influence is felt in the paintings done for Bundi's rulers. Rao Surjan surrendered the great fortress of Ranthambhor to the Mughals on very favourable terms. This event is illustrated in a frequently published, near contemporary painting of the *Akbar Nama* in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (acc. no. IS 2-1896.75/117). The official policy of the Bundi rulers thereafter, was to cooperate with the ruling power. Kumar Duda, Rao Surjan's eldest son, it must be noted, never accepted his father's cooperation with Akbar. He must have considered his father's policy as being against the Rajput cause and hence he still supported Bundi's former ally, the Maharana of Mewar who fought the invaders. Duda, referred to as Daud or Doda by Islamic historians, ventured a guerilla war against the Mughals, until he was defeated on imperial command by his father's and his younger brother's armies. He died in August 1585.

Rao Surjan served the Mughals in Allahabad, Bihar, Peshawar, and Bengal with a *mansab* of 2,000, before he died at Banaras. The name of the Hara Mahal at Fatehpur Sikri, for some time the Mughal capital under Akbar, certainly alludes to the Hara presence at the imperial Mughal court.

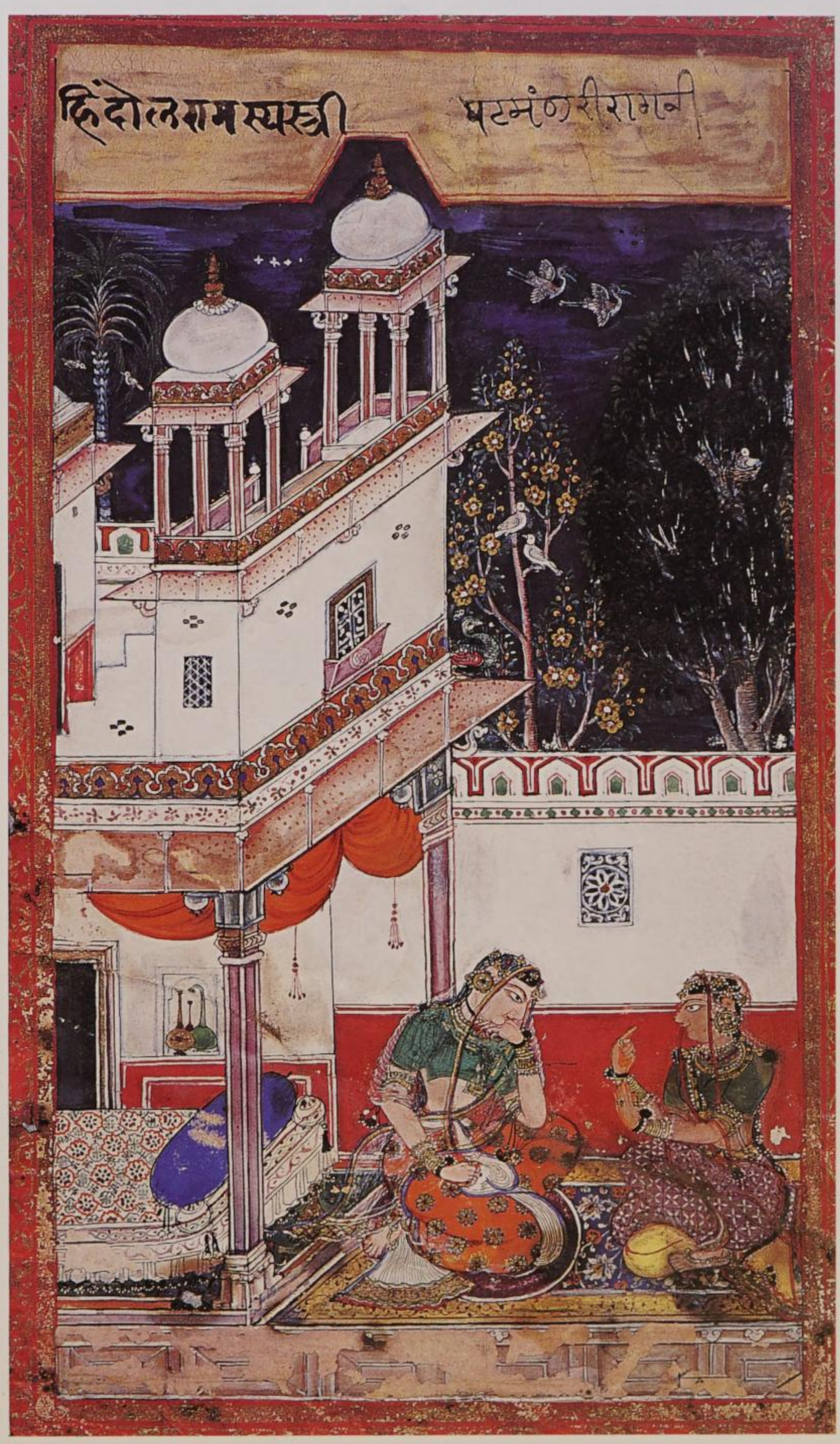
Rao Bhoj Hara and the Dated Beginnings of Bundi Painting

When Bhoj, Surjan's second son, succeeded his father in 1585, he was thirty-four years of age. Five years later he still must have been posted at Chunar near Banaras, where his father had lived at the end of his life. At Chunar, disciples of the founders of the Mughal atelier of painting (Mir Sayyid 'Ali and 'Abd al-Samad) completed a *ragamala* of thirty-six paintings, which afterwards became the standard topic of painting for almost all subsequent Hara chieftains. This *ragamala* "was ready on the day of Wednesday at the time of the mid-day prayer in the place Chumar...on the date of the 29th of the month Rabi'al-Akhir, year 999 [February 25, 1591]...". This set of paintings with its Nagari inscriptions in the text panel constitutes the oldest dated *ragamala* and the earliest dated proof of Mughalized painting done for a Rajput ruler. That these paintings were commissioned by a Hara is shown by the very numerous later copies of this set of paintings, which in course of time became more and more Rajput and less and less Mughal in style. Figure 1, illustrating the Patamanjari *ragini* from this dated set, shows some typical features of this early Bundi style. The treatment

of nature is very realistic, and everywhere outside the walled premises of the palace are various kinds of birds; in other paintings from this set there are also scorpions, squirrels, peacocks, frogs, fishes, bees, etc. Large areas of basic colours are left undisturbed by patterns. In the present example, the white walls are devoid of linear divisions and the red surface in the lower part of the wall shows no relief or painting. The almost square heads of the women are all shown in strict profile with the eye painted in frontally. The earrings are large and the *pallu* of the sari is separated from the head as if on an air cushion; it does not rest directly on the hair or shoulders as it should.

Figure 2, a portrait of "Hara Rao Bhoj", according to the Nagari inscription on the back, belongs to a set of Bikaner portraits of the rulers of Bundi. It is a later version of an often published painting from 1606 by Nur Muhammad, now in the Sidhu collection, California, which reportedly represents Rao Bhoj Rathor, uncle of Raja Rai Singh of Bikaner. Earlier writers have already remarked on the Deccani fashion of the Rao's costume, and it is probably due to the Nagari inscription, which identifies the subject with a member of the Rathor clan, that the ruler has been known as Bhoj Rathor ever since its first publication in 1949. Figure 2 and its earlier version, however, originally stem from the same collection, as is attested by two identical stamp-impressions on the back of the paintings, as well as the signature of "Khet Singh". In 1606 Rao Bhoj Hara was fifty-five years old, an age which would suit the earlier, dated version very well. Besides, in the early seventeenth century Rao Bhoj actually served in the Deccan: he accompanied Rai Singh of Bikaner to Ahmednagar in 1601 and met Rai Singh again in 1605. Moreover, he was most probably an uncle of Rai Singh Rathor since he was married to at least two Rathor princesses, one of whom was among the eight

1
Patamanjari *ragini*. From the Chunar *ragamala*. Chunar, Sub-Imperial Mughal style for a Bundi ruler, dated 1591. Opaque watercolour and gold on paper; 20.5 x 11.0 cm (within inner rules). Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras. Photograph: J.K. Bautze.



satis, or women who immolated themselves on the Rao's funeral pyre. Another Rathor princess of Rao Bhoj is mentioned as "Rathor Akhaikumari" by the Bundi chronicler Surya Malla Mishran.

Rao Bhoj Rathor, who is recorded nowhere else, is hence in all probability Rao Bhoj Hara, the said ruler of Bundi. This is even more plausible when we remember that the Bikaner royal collection once included a near-contemporary portrait of Rao Surjan Hara as well.

2
Rao Bhoj Hara. From a set of portraits of the rulers of Bundi. Bikaner, circa 1680. Opaque watercolour, silver and gold on paper; 29.8 x 19.9 cm (folio). Private collection. Photograph: J.K. Bautze.

A slightly later Dutch description of the city of Agra, for many years the Mughal capital, mentions a palace of Rao Bhoj on the river Yamuna ("...van Radia Bohos, den vader van den tegenwoordigen Ray Routan..."). The enumeration of Rao Bhoj among the other Mughal and Rajput nobles underlines Jahangir's statement that he (Bhoj) was "included among the great Amirs".

Rao Ratan, the Most Powerful Hara of the Seventeenth Century

Ratan, eldest son of Rao Bhoj, was born on the tenth of the bright half of Agahan (November–December) in the Vikrama year 1625 (1568 CE). He became the ruler of Bundi in VS 1664 (1608 CE) after his father's death. In early 1608, Emperor Jahangir noted: "At this time Ratan, son of Bhoj Hara, who is one of the chief Rajput nobles, came to the camp and waited on me, bringing three elephants as an offering. One of these was much approved, and they valued it in the office at 15,000 rupees. It was entered among my private elephants, and I gave it the name of Ratangaj.... I dignified Ratan with the title of Sarbuland Ray." A contemporary Mughal portrait of that elephant has survived in the Indian Museum, Calcutta. This reference to elephants in the possession of the Hara rulers attests to their predilection for this royal animal, which is otherwise shown in numerous paintings on walls as well as on paper.

Rao Ratan Sarbuland Ray was sent on campaigns by Jahangir. In 1614 he fought against Rana Amar Singh of Mewar, Bundi's former suzerain. A year later Ratan's brother Hriday Narayan was sent to Kangra in the north, where he fought until 1620. In 1617 Rao Ratan moved to Burhanpur in the Deccan. He was recalled from there to the court in 1623 and received "a special jewelled dagger". From Agra he was to go to the Deccan again, in order to pursue the army of the rebellious prince

Khurram, the future Shah Jahan. In course of time, he became "chargé d'affaires" of the Deccan and was rightly called the "incarnation of loyalty and chivalry". Often he was strongly pressed, and it is known that he fought from the back of an elephant called "Light of the World". He so gallantly defended Burhanpur from the attacks of the united armies of Malik Ambar and prince Khurram, that he received the further title of Ram Raj, "than which there is no higher title in the Dakhin". He was also awarded the *mansab* of 5,000 *zat* (infantry) and 5,000 *sawar* (cavalry), a rank which he held from 1624 to his death on the 10th of the bright half of Margashirsha in the Vikrama year "elephant [8], snake [8], taste [6], earth [1]", i.e. 1688 (1631 CE) following the Bundi historian.

Rao Ratan had taken over the palace of his father in Agra, where he would have seen the murals in the Bagh-i Nur Afshan, commonly called Ram Bagh. This probably led him to have the Badal Mahal in Bundi, also built by his father, decorated with frescos which are stylistically still very Mughal but betray more of a Rajput influence than any other paintings done hitherto for a Hara ruler. His building activity is best shown by the Ratna Daulat, today called Daulat Ratan, within the ancient palace complex of Bundi. This part of the palace can be seen in the right-hand part of figure 3. The topmost part is occupied by the Badal Mahal.

In the Deccan, where the Rao spent the greater part of the rest of his life, he founded Ratanpur near Burhanpur. In Burhanpur, Rao Ratan must have met a European merchant, Mr Willoughby, from whom he purchased "some tapestry", presumably from Arras. Of the 18,450 rupees due, according to the traveller Peter Mundy, "Raw Rutton" only paid 1,000 by November 1630. Echoes of these tapestries can still be seen in the "farangi" frescos of the Badal Mahal in Bundi, to which we will refer below.

3
Inner courtyard within the old palace of Bundi with the Daulat Ratan to the right, the Badal Mahal, centre top, and the courtyard facing the Chhattar Mahal, left.
Photograph: J.K. Bautze.

No other Hara of the seventeenth century was more often portrayed than Rao Ratan, and it is not surprising when we see him inspecting a painting of an elephant amidst his nobles, as part of a large mural in his own palace in Bundi. No more surprising are certain Deccani influences, such as the long sword or the Deccani shawl worn as a sign of honour and rank. Rao Ratan appears to be of lighter complexion in the wall-paintings of the palace of his ancestors than in a number of miniature paintings, especially those executed by Mughal (not Rajput) artists. Figure 4, an inscribed portrait in a Sub-Imperial Mughal style, shows him at an advanced age with a slightly darker complexion, as he appears in a few other portraits as well.

In the absence of Rao Ratan, Bundi was ruled by his eldest son, Gopinath, who was born on the second day of the bright half of

4
Rao Ratan Hara. Formerly in the "Jotdan" (royal collection) of Mewar; Sub-Imperial Mughal style in Rajasthan, circa 1630. Opaque watercolour and gold on paper; 19.7 x 12.3 cm (folio); 13.6 x 8.0 cm (image). Private collection. Photograph: J.K. Bautze.

Bhadrapad in VS 1646 (1589 CE). Besides Gopinath, Rao Ratan had three more sons (Madho, Hari, and Jagannath), and two daughters (Badankumari and Harikumari). Gopinath married eleven princesses and had thirteen sons. He died, in circumstances which are not entirely clear, during his father's lifetime. It was hence Gopinath's eldest son Shatru Sal who succeeded to the throne of Bundi with the *mansab* of 2,000/3,000, the title Rao, and the fief of Bundi. Shatru Sal followed the example of his predecessor Rao Ratan and presented forty elephants to Shah Jahan.

The Badal Mahal Frescos

Despite the fact that Rao Ratan figures prominently in the wall-paintings of the Badal Mahal, they were – due to his prolonged absences – in all probability not commissioned by him, but either by his son Gopinath or one of his queens. The murals within the Badal Mahal can be divided into five different, more or less horizontal levels; the northern

5
(facing page)
The northern wall within the Badal Mahal, in the old palace of Bundi. Photograph: J.K. Bautze.

6
The painted ceiling of the Badal Mahal, Bundi, circa 1620–30. Photograph: J.K. Bautze.

7
The central cupola of the painted ceiling of the Badal Mahal, Bundi: Krishna dancing the Rasamandala with the full autumn moon in the centre, and dancing peacocks and women holding burning candles in the adjoining squinches, circa 1620–30. Photograph: J.K. Bautze.

wall can be seen in figure 5. Level A comprises the wall above the floor and below eye-level. As in figure 1, it is painted red, and measures about 1.42 m in height. Level B is marked by mostly vertical recesses (thirteen in all) and other vertical areas of rectangular shape. It measures about 94 cm in height and basically contains a *ragamala*, the major subject of my monograph published in 1987. Level C, an uninterrupted band, 56 cm in height, is situated above eye-level, about 2.45 m from the floor. This level illustrates, in a kind of continuing narrative, events from the life of Rao Ratan. It includes the depiction of various sports such as elephant fights, polo games, and several hunting scenes. Level D is the last level on the perpendicular wall. It is situated above a floral band visible in figure 5 and consists of painted areas with a pointed arch. The murals within these arches mainly illustrate events from the lives of both Krishna and Rama and have to be seen together with the large frescos on the ceilings: level E. This constitutes the paintings in the squinch nets, the central cupola, and the two adjoining half-cupolas, as demonstrated by figure 6. In the central cupola, for which see also figure 7, Krishna dances the round dance with the gopis. In the centre of this Rasamandala appears the full moon which also serves as a lotus with petals which shelter the

gods who have assembled to witness Krishna's dance. Clockwise around the central cupola flies Rama with Sita and Lakshmana in the magical Pushpakavimana, carried in the manner of a palanquin by angel-like female figures in the eastern half-cupola. In the opposite half-cupola flies Krishna with his favourite beloved in a carriage drawn by two horses. Ganesha acts as Krishna's charioteer while further angelic figures escort the chariot through the sky. The squinch nets around Krishna are filled with the ten avataras of Vishnu while the same areas around Rama are painted with scenes from the *Ramayana* or life of Rama.

Figure 7 reveals more details of the painted ceiling. The colours are strong and bright. The blue-complexioned Krishna contrasts effectively with the predominant red which the artist selected for the background. The green pigment of the banana trees placed in each corner of this ceiling star has flaked badly and, if intact, would have dramatically enhanced the overall effect of this composition. Peacocks with spread tails in the adjoining segments serve as a frame, while women with burning candles in the four corners seem to illuminate the central cupola which otherwise receives comparatively little daylight; this is why the colours here are still unfaded and appear in their original freshness.

8
Fresco in the northwestern corner, northern wall, of the Badal Mahal, Bundi, representing "farangis" (Europeans), circa 1620–30. Photograph: J.K. Bautze.

Each of the four corners of level D is painted with a scene showing life-size European characters, as in figure 8 showing one of these compositions. These four murals constitute the earliest proof *in situ* of the so-called "farangi theme" in Rajasthani painting. The "farangis" are dressed in a mixed European-Indian fashion, but basically what the Indian artist considered to be European. Some appear to be blond-haired; they all wear European swords and a rather unusual headdress, and are all shown in three-quarter view as a rule. As might be expected, they are generally of fair complexion. The colourful flowering shrubs in some of these murals betray a certain Deccani influence.

The western interior wall of the Badal Mahal represents, in level D, not only one of the most exciting hunting scenes to be found in seventeenth-century painting from Rajasthan but certainly the most monumental: figure 9 reproduces less than its northern half. The southern half contains in its southern extremity a published portrait of Madho Singh, Rao Ratan's second son, hunting boars from horseback. The northern or right-hand part of

the composition includes the killing of one or more tigers by a number of archers and swordsmen, as also occurs in an often published folio from the *Akbar Nama* in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (IS 2-1896.17/117). This right half of a double-page composition painted by the artists Basawan and Tara illustrates Akbar's lion hunt at Narwar, which occurred in the summer of 1561. As the V&A *Akbar Nama* is generally dated to circa 1590, it might be surmised that the artist of the mural had seen this or a similar illustrated manuscript executed during Akbar's reign. Figure 10, a detail from the central part of the hunting scene, shows a lion trying to elude the group of beaters which has almost encircled it. Lions of this kind had always been present in Bundi painting and were to become still more famous when some of the court artists migrated south to Kota and founded what was to become the Kota idiom of Bundi painting, until it eventually became stylistically almost independent from its parental Bundi school.

The three paintings below that part of the hunting scene illustrated here by figure 9, level B, depict, from left to right, the *raginis* Ramakari, Gauri, and *raga* Malavakaushika or Malkauns. Compared to the murals in the upper levels, they were painted later and can be dated to the 1640s, especially since they bear certain stylistic affinities to the so-called Kota *Bhagavata* series, datable to the 1630s (Bautze 1987).

9
Northern third of the western wall in the Badal Mahal, Bundi: Scenes from a hunt and swordsmen and archers killing tiger(s) in level C (top level in this illustration). *Raginis* Ramakari, Gauri, and *raga* Malavakaushika, from left to right, below (level B); circa 1620–30 (level C), circa 1640–50 (level B). *Ragini* Ramakari: 94 x 52 cm; Gauri: 94 x 50 cm; *raga* Malavakaushika: 94.0 x 50.5 cm. Photograph: J.K. Bautze.

10
Badal Mahal, Bundi,
western wall, centre: A lion in the wilderness surrounded by beaters, detail from a hunting scene, circa 1620–30.
Photograph: J.K. Bautze.

Early Seventeenth-Century Bundi Painting on Paper

The earliest seventeenth-century Bundi paintings are actually drawings: a *ragamala* in particular, of which a number of examples are in the National Museum, New Delhi, in addition to three formerly in the Pan-Asian collection dispersed in London in 1983. Of the latter group figure 11 illustrates *ragini* Gauri. As this *ragini* is drawn with the greatest precision, it was evidently not intended to be coloured in a later stage of the work; it was to serve as a guideline for future generations of artists. Its details are so minutely drawn that it reminds one more of Mughal than Rajasthani drawings. Compared to more typical Bundi painting, the head of the woman is almost square and betrays strong Mughal influence. The shape of her breasts and her large eyes are reminiscent of early Rajput painting. Monkeys and birds inhabit the foliage of the deciduous trees, the leaves of which are individually drawn. The peacocks here are large-eyed as well; the realistic treatment of their feet,

11
Ragini Gauri. Bundi, circa 1600–20. Ink and watercolour on paper; 18.6 x 11.0 cm. Formerly Pan-Asian collection, now in a private collection. Photograph: J.K. Bautze.

12
Krishna being praised by Indra and Narada. *Bhagavata Purana*, Book 10. Bundi, 1630s. Opaque watercolour on paper; 33.0 x 21.6 cm. Government Museum, Kota, no. 1950-27. Photograph: J.K. Bautze.

13
Ambika Puja, detail with Shiva being worshipped. *Bhagavata Purana*, Book 10. Bundi, 1630s. Opaque watercolour on paper; 34.3 x 22.2 cm (full painting size). Government Museum, Kota, no. 1950-30. Photograph: J.K. Bautze.

however, betrays again the skill of an artist trained in an imperial Mughal atelier. The overall effect of the drawing is that of finesse. It hence cannot be dated later than the first or second decade of the seventeenth century. A small number of drawings have survived which are in all probability by the same hand as most of the frescos in levels C, D, and E of the Badal Mahal. These drawings were, however, not available for publication.

Stylistically, the closest comparison with the *ragamala* murals in level B is offered by the Kota *Bhagavata*. Known from several published paintings, the series illustrates incidents from the life of Krishna as narrated in the tenth book of the *Bhagavata Purana*. It got its name from the Government Museum, Kota, which houses forty of its folios (acc. nos. 1950.1-40). Other single folios are in the collection of Vinod Kanoria, Patna, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and the Victoria and Albert Museum (IS 150-1949). Several paintings from this set are unfinished.

Figure 12 illustrates the 27th chapter from Book 10 of the *Bhagavata Purana:* Krishna had lifted Mount Govardhan and thus saved the inhabitants of Vraj, his village, from a deluge caused by the god Indra. Indra had to acknowledge Krishna's superiority and is shown here, wearing a crown, together with Narada praising an elevated, seated Krishna. Indra's mount, the elephant Airavata, is waiting at a distance behind. Figure 13, a detail of a painting showing the worship of Ambika at the river Sarasvati, introduces the god Shiva shown in full profile with a woman, apparently Ambika, seated next to him. Although the nearest dated comparison is offered by several folios of Book 8 of the *Bhagavata Purana* illustrated by the Mewari artist Sahibdin in 1648, now in the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune, the Kota *Bhagavata* retains certain traits known from earlier Mughal painting. The turbans are flat and often leave some space at the back of the head making the hair there visible, as in Akbari or early Jahangiri portraits. The *jama* with a four-pointed hem (*chakdar jama*), which was falling out of fashion by Shah Jahan's reign (1628–58), still makes its appearance. The faces, however, are round as in the Badal Mahal *ragamala,* which also shares with the Kota *Bhagavata* the rendering of the landscape in the background. Besides, the parting of the hair is very pronounced in both the Badal Mahal *ragamala* and the Kota *Bhagavata,* as is demonstrated here by the seated woman near Shiva in figure 13. In view of the above mentioned "archaisms", however, it appears difficult to date this set later than the 1630s.

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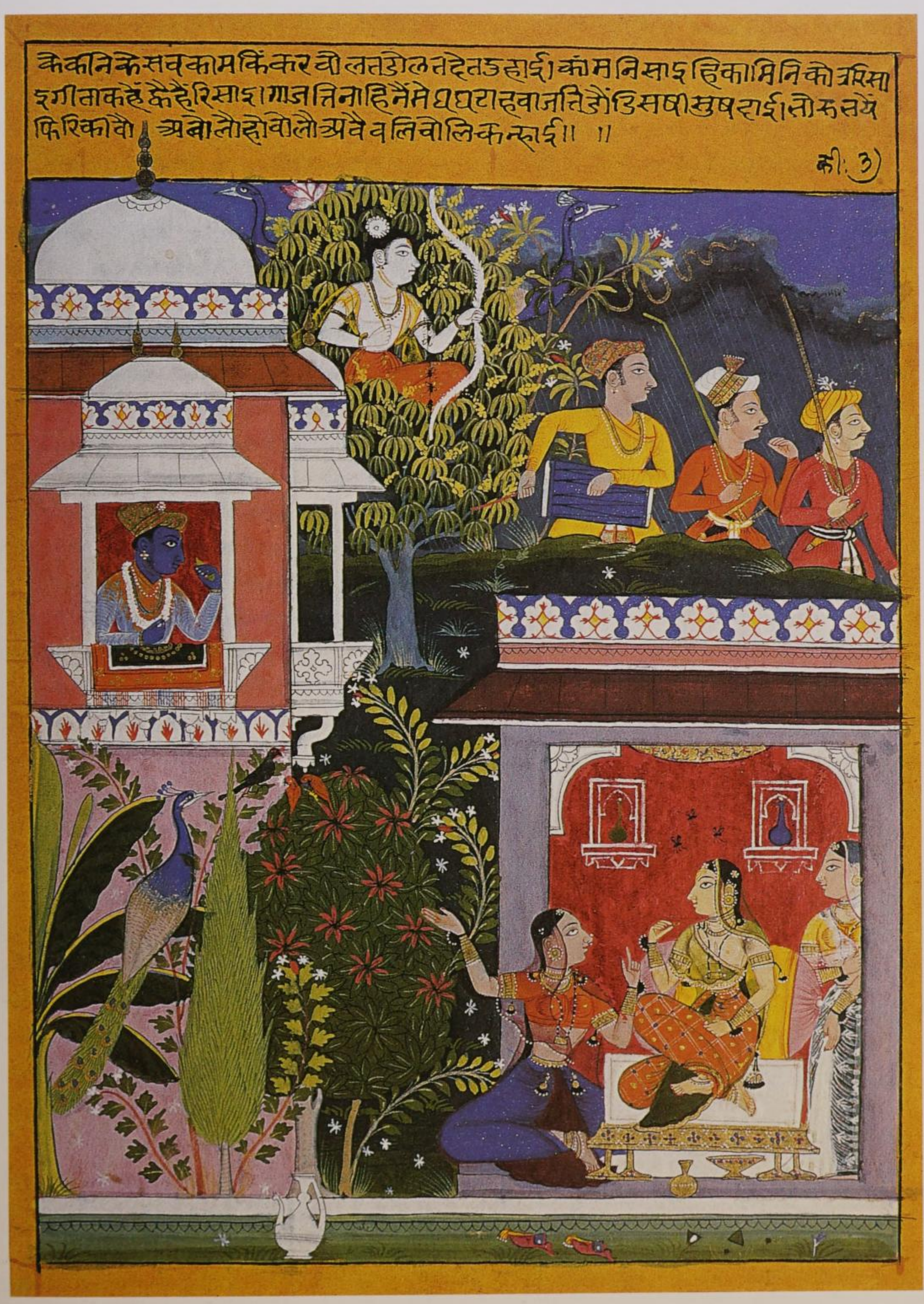
THE SAVING POWER OF SORON: SAHIBDIN OF UDAIPUR AND THE *SUKARAKSHETRA MAHATMYA*

Andrew Topsfield

Sahibdin and Maharana Jagat Singh (1628–52)

The achievement of the painter Sahibdin in developing the classic seventeenth-century style of manuscript illustration at Udaipur has long been known. His first ascribed work, a *ragamala* series, is dated in July 1628, just four months after Maharana Jagat Singh had succeeded his father Karan Singh (r. 1620–28). By this time, the local Mewar idiom of the widespread, sixteenth-century Early Rajput style, seen a generation earlier in the *ragamala* painted by Nasiruddin in 1605 at the temporary capital of Chawand,[1] had fallen out of fashion. In 1615, after long resistance, Maharana Amar Singh had finally accepted Mughal suzerainty and in subsequent years both Prince Karan and his son Jagat attended Emperor Jahangir's court. As a result, from Karan Singh's reign there was a greater, though still modest, access of Mughal influences at Udaipur. These probably included some form of the widespread Popular (or sub-imperial) Mughal painting style, which brought a modified Mughal naturalism and a muted, sometimes muddy palette to typically Rajput subjects such as the *ragamala*. In his own *ragamala*, Sahibdin brilliantly integrated these two disparate styles for the first time at Udaipur, combining the vibrant colouring of Early Rajput painting with an enhanced spatial sense and more versatile figural and compositional conventions acquired in his earlier Popular Mughal training.[2]

Sahibdin's next series of illustrations, the *Gita Govinda* of 1629, reveals an increasingly confident experimentation in his interpretations of Jayadeva's lush and erotically charged poetic imagery, through artfully varied scenes of Krishna and Radha in union or separation in verdant landscape or pavilion settings.[3] His being a Muslim (like Nasiruddin before him) was never a hindrance to Sahibdin's sympathetic evocation of Hindu devotional or mythological themes. In the early 1630s he went on to paint an extensive series of the *Rasikapriya* of Kesav Das, a Hindi treatise on the typology of idealized lovers (*nayaka*s and *nayika*s).[4] Here he shows his mastery as an interpreter of poetical texts. Kesav's elaborate classification of lovers and their emotional transactions – and particularly his expressive visual imagery, drawn from nature and from human life – would no doubt have been expounded to Sahibdin by the court librarian or pandit in charge of manuscript production. The two men evidently had a good understanding, for the system generally worked well. Sahibdin, on his more inspired days, would seize on the salient visual images arising from the poetry and recombine them inventively in well-balanced compositional schemes of his own. This literal-minded but



1
The confidante urges the *nayika* to join her lover. Illustration to the *Rasikapriya* of Kesav Das. By Sahibdin. Udaipur, circa 1630–35. Gouache on paper. Government Museum, Udaipur. Photograph: A. Topsfield.

often elegant mode of adaptation is seen in an illustration to *Rasikapriya* X.22 (figure 1). The companion of the *nayika* exhorts her to forget her pride and go to her lover (or Krishna, seen at a balcony). In accordance with Kesav's verses, she points to the peacocks, whose plaintive cries in the rainy season make them the servants of the love-god Kama (shown, with his bow, in a tree), and to the thunder-clouds, resounding like "drums of pleasure" (personified as a human drummer). Sahibdin skilfully interposes trees and shrubs between the palace and pavilion, otherwise hardly separated within the compact vertical format which he favoured in his early period. The building on the left recalls contemporary architecture at Udaipur, such as the Gul Mahal, the pleasure palace on Jagmandir island which was completed by Jagat Singh around 1630.

By the mid-1640s, with advancing years, Jagat Singh had begun to put youthful delights behind him and to turn increasingly to religious devotion and charitable works.[5] In 1647 he went on an extensive pilgrimage tour during which he performed several *tuladan* ceremonies, acts of charity in which he was weighed against gold or silver. These auspicious occasions were commemorated in the stone *tulastambha* monuments outside the Bari Pol gateway of the City Palace. In his last years he built the imposing Jagdish temple on Udaipur's main street. His later manuscript commissions for the royal library also show a growing piety, both religious and to a large extent ancestral, since the Maharanas were themselves regarded as descendants of both Rama and the Sun-god Surya. In 1645 Sahibdin and his assistants completed a series of the *Suryavamsaprakasha*, chronicling the solar dynasty of the Sisodia rulers of Mewar.[6] But he was clearly uninspired by this bald dynastic record. Its sparse, repetitive compositions sprawl weakly in the wide, horizontal manuscript format which had now been adopted. More successful was the lengthy *Bhagavata Purana* series of 1648.[7] Its surviving illustrations vary both in format and compositional skill, but include two spirited full-page landscape scenes by Sahibdin, depicting the Trikuta mountain and the temptation of Markandeya.[8]

The final and greatest commission of Jagat Singh's reign was a uniquely ambitious manuscript of the *Ramayana*, originally with some 450 illustrations, executed in the years 1649–53.[9] Sahibdin worked on only two of its seven books, the *Ayodhyakanda* of 1650 and the *Yuddhakanda* of 1652. This concentration of his efforts helped to produce the best work of his later career, showing a greater mastery than ever of multi-episodic continuous narration and of densely peopled landscape, palace, or battle scenes within the horizontal format, above all in the *Yuddhakanda* section. In this "Book of Battles" Rama and his allies defeat Ravana and he returns at last with Sita to Ayodhya.[10] When Jagat Singh received this magnificent book in August 1652, only weeks before his death, it must surely have gladdened him to see the climactic restoration of his legendary ancestor to the throne, through the inspired work of his favourite artist.

Maharana Raj Singh, Soron, and the *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya*

In October 1652 Jagat Singh was succeeded by the twenty-three-year-old Raj Singh. For the first year or more of his reign, many of the local and imported artists who had been recruited for the great *Ramayana* series were still finishing off its remaining books. But Sahibdin had no further hand in the project. His first and perhaps his only commission from Raj Singh – for it is his last known work – was of a different and unusual kind. It is a series of twenty-six illustrations to the *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya*, a Sanskrit *tirthamahatmya* text, forming part of the *Varaha*

Purana.[11] It celebrates the sanctifying virtues of the pilgrimage town of Sukara, the modern Soron, lying on the Ganga east of Aligarh in Uttar Pradesh. This *tirtha* is sacred to Varaha, the boar incarnation of Vishnu, who slew the demon Hiranyaksha there.[12] In 1876 Atkinson noted in his Gazetteer: "Devout Hindus from all parts of India, after visiting Muttra, come to Soron to bathe in the Burhganga, or old stream of the Ganges, which here forms a considerable pool, with temples and ghats on the eastern and northern sides...."[13] He mentions eighteen "well kept" ghats, fifty or sixty temples with many pipal trees around them, and thirty large dharamsalas (rest-houses). More than half the local Hindus were Brahmins, "a fine race of handsome men distinguished by the wearing of a scarlet *pagri*. They are very well-to-do and derive a large income from donations sent to them from all parts of northern India.... They realise large contributions at the various festivals that take place during the year."

In 1648 the young Prince Raj Singh had visited Soron during a pilgrimage tour to Mathura, Gokula, Prayag, Kashi and other centres, in the company of his grandmother Jambuvati and the princess Nand Kumari, daughter of Maharaja Karan Singh of Bikaner.[14] At that time the main Ganga river still flowed through Soron, for it only changed its bed later in the seventeenth century.[15] A *tuladan* ceremony was held in which the prince was weighed against gold and the royal ladies against silver. The local brahmins no doubt regaled them with popular stories about the holy *tirtha*s, as recorded in their *Mahatmya*, and these miraculous tales evidently made a lasting impression. It may well have been to commemorate this pilgrimage, and perhaps to please the female relatives who had accompanied him, that Raj Singh now commissioned illustrations to this auspicious text from his leading artist. The colophon of the *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya*[16] (figure 15) is dated on the tenth (Vijayadashami) of the bright half of Ashvin (i.e. at the Dasahra festival, one of the major occasions in the Mewar court calendar, when gifts were presented[17]), in VS 1712 or October 1655, in the autumn season, in the reign of Maharana Raj Singh. It is said to have been written at the command of Sri Divanji (the Maharana in his role as Divan or minister to Shiva Eklingji, the tutelary deity of Mewar); the librarian Vyasa Jayadeva commissioned it, the scribe Hirananda wrote the text, and Sahibdin made the paintings. Its pages are numbered 1–26 near the lower right corner of the red border; a later, coarser hand repeats the numbering in the upper border, with the additional title *bara puran* (i.e. *Varaha Purana*).

The first page of the series sets the scene of the Puranic frame story. The narrator of the *Varaha Purana* sits reciting on a low *gaddi* (figure 2). A circle of long-haired rishis and

2
Recitation of the *Varaha Purana* to rishis and brahmins. *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya*, fol. 1. By Sahibdin. Udaipur, 1655. Gouache on paper. Photograph: D.J. Ehnbom.

3
The Boar-god Varaha discourses to the Earth-goddess. *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya*, fol. 2(?). By Sahibdin. Udaipur, 1655. Gouache on paper. Photograph: D.J. Ehnbom.

4
Pilgrims at the Chakratirtha at Soron. *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya*, fol. 3. By Sahibdin. Udaipur, 1655. Gouache on paper. Photograph: W.G. Archer.

brahmins tending a sacred fire surround him, in a grove indicated by a row of Sahibdin's conventional trees. The circular grouping of the audience makes for a simplified composition, but the attitudes of the rishis near the foreground are sufficiently varied (one is shown frontally, in full face) to avoid monotony. The next page introduces the deity Varaha (figure 3), whose discourse to the Earth-goddess forms the substance of the *Purana* (and of the *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya*). Seated on a lotus amid the primordial waters and holding the attributes of Vishnu, he bears the Earth-goddess aloft on his tusk and tells her of the sacred *tirtha*s which are dear to him. Soron (*Saukaraka*), he says, is a great *tirtha*, a "liberator from worldly bondage". Sahibdin's iconic image is an impressive one. The commanding figure of the Boar-god stands out against the ocean and its abundant lotuses, fish, turtle, and makara, which are set prominently in a billowing ground of old-fashioned, fish-scale wave forms.

Among the holy spots at Soron that Varaha mentions is the Chakratirtha, where the Wheel of Vishnu is installed (figure 4). The pilgrim who bathes there at the auspicious time will be reborn in a rich family of high social status and "will live for ten thousand and ten hundred years". Sahibdin's lively illustration of a riverside ghat may be based more on scenes by the Pichola lake at Udaipur, for it seems unlikely that he had seen Soron for himself. Pilgrims bathe in the flowing Ganga, women fetch water, a dhobi beats his washing on a rock. Yogis meditate and celestial *deva* figures in sky-boats appear. Noblemen seen in a boat and (in diminutive size) on the shore are perhaps visiting princely pilgrims like Raj Singh and his party.

The *Mahatmya* then tells two stories of the saving powers of Soron. These are briefly summarized here, with a commentary on Sahibdin's versions of them.

The story of the she-jackal and the vulture

One day a she-jackal was shot and killed by Prince Somadatta, while hunting at the place called Somatirtha (figure 5). Here and in subsequent pages Sahibdin makes use of continuous narration, often dividing the composition either informally or more explicitly into two vertical registers. Above, Somadatta sets forth on his rearing horse to hunt; this figure recalls a contemporary hunting portrait, possibly of Raj Singh, in Sahibdin's style.[18] Below, the prince pursues and kills the she-jackal (seen thrice), beside the Ganga. *Because of her past good deeds and the virtues of this holy spot, the slain she-jackal was reborn as the beautiful princess of Kanti, "endowed with long eyes, pure and lovely in every limb, fair, virtuous, and well-versed in the sixty-four arts"* (figure 6). In this subsequent illustration, Sahibdin shows the princess and her maids in a conventional chamber within her father's palace: chess and *chaupar* games and a vina lie before her, as signs of her accomplishments. The king appears at a *jharokha* window, much like the regular balcony appearances of the Maharanas at Udaipur.

Meanwhile, at another holy place called Gridhravata, which was a banyan tree frequented by vultures, a vulture was also shot by Prince Somadatta while hunting and was in turn reborn as the virtuous prince of Kalinga (figure 7). Again in continuous narration, Somadatta aims an arrow at the bird in the banyan, which is retrieved by two shikaris on the right. This not very vulture-like bird then ends up, pathetically, in the river, while parakeets and other birds wing freely in the sky. Below, the hunters head for home. Because of the constraints of the vertical format, the undulating Ganga flows under the truncated hindlegs of the rear horse.

In the fullness of time, because of the friendship between the two kingdoms, the prince of Kalinga and the princess of Kanti were married, and the couple then returned to Kalinga (figure 8). In the upper register Sahibdin sets a conventional scene of the royal wedding under a ceremonial pandal in a palace courtyard. Below, the bridegroom on a white horse and the bride in a purdah palanquin set off with their escort; the *palki*-bearers have hats of a European style. *A true love then grew between the happy couple and "they enjoyed themselves in pleasure grounds, in shrines of deities, and in the forests and gardens..."* (figure 9). Sahibdin shows their life together in

5
Prince Somadatta kills the she-jackal while hunting. *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya*, fol. 5. By Sahibdin. Udaipur, 1655. Gouache on paper. Photograph: W.G. Archer.

6
The accomplished princess of Kanti, in her father's palace. *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya*, fol. 8(?). By Sahibdin. Udaipur, 1655. Gouache on paper. Photograph: D.J. Ehnbom.

7
Prince Somadatta shoots the vulture in the banyan while hunting. *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya*, fol. 6(?). By Sahibdin. Udaipur, 1655. Gouache on paper. Photograph: D.J. Ehnbom.

8
The marriage of the princess of Kanti and the prince of Kalinga. *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya*, fol. 9. By Sahibdin. Udaipur, 1655. Gouache on paper. Photograph: D.J. Ehnbom.

four conventional scenes, deriving partly from the "love in union" subjects of his *Rasikapriya* days. The couple embrace in a bed-chamber, then promenade with garlands to a forest bower; below, the respectful wife attends her husband in a public chamber and at a palace balcony.

One day, however, the princess made an unusual and unexplained request. She asked that every day at noon she should be allowed to retire for a time into a secluded chamber and be seen by no one. The prince consented to this, and so the years went by. They had children, and in time the prince became King of Kalinga. But one day, his curiosity finally impelled him to break his promise and to seek out his wife in her mysterious daily retreat. He found her there prostrate with a grievous headache. She then promised to explain all to him, if he would renounce the throne to his son and retire with her to Soron (figure 10). In five consecutive scenes Sahibdin shows the prince agreeing to his wife's request for seclusion, later deliberating about it, and finally entering her draped chamber, where she is at first shown doubly, lying in solitary pain and sitting up to receive him.

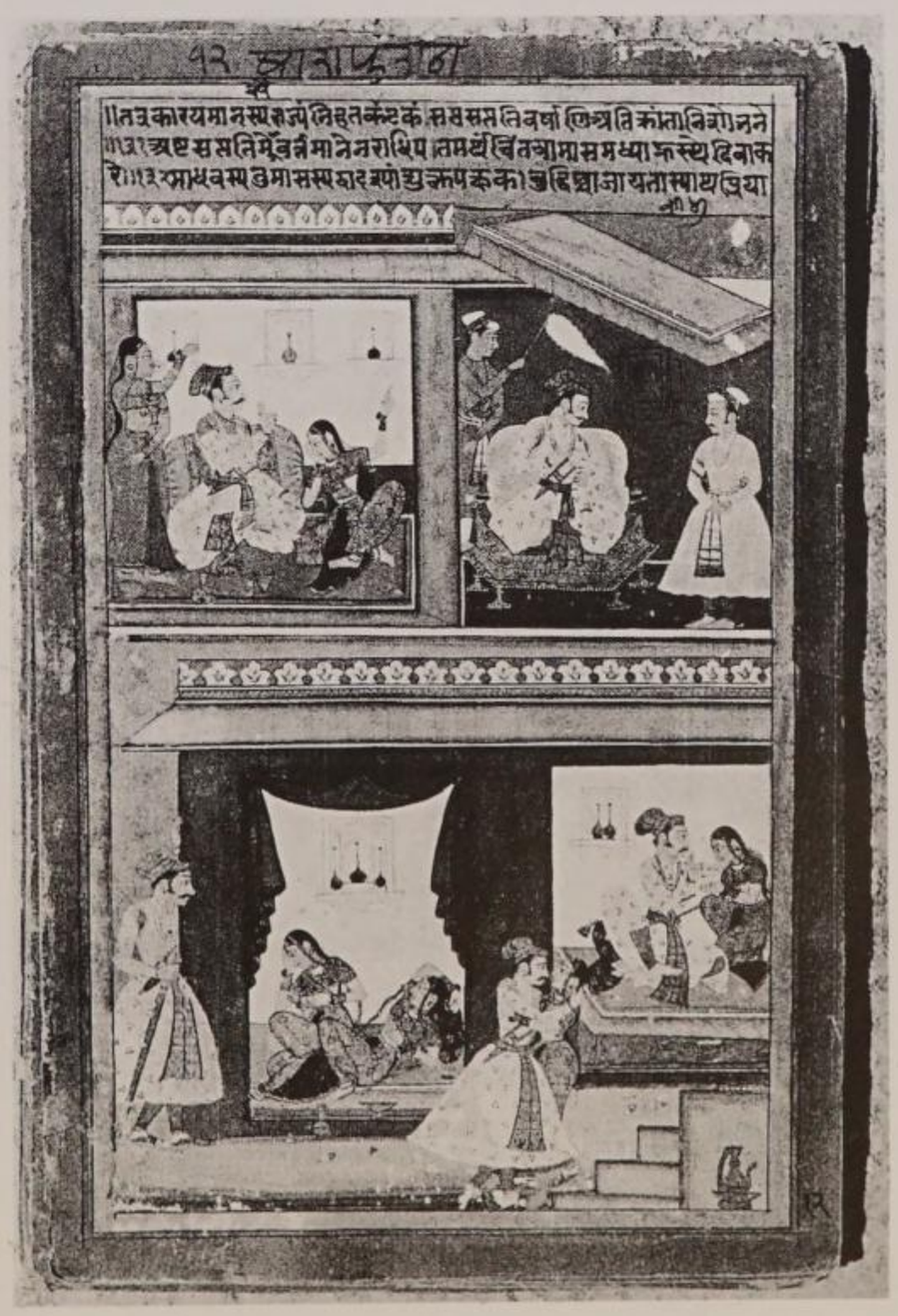
The royal party accordingly set off for Soron with elephants and horses, making camp along the way. Arriving at the holy city, the royal couple venerated Varaha (figure 11). Sahibdin, in his literal fashion, shows these three phases of the journey consecutively. *Finally, the princess told her secret: she was once the she-jackal slain at this spot, and it was the pain of the king's arrow, still lodged in her head, that had troubled her daily. The prince revealed that he too was the vulture slain at Soron. So they remained there in devotion for the rest of their days and attained a heavenly rebirth.*

9
The married life of the prince and princess at Kalinga. *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya*, fol. 11. By Sahibdin. Udaipur, 1655. Gouache on paper. Photograph: W.G. Archer.

The story of the wagtail

Varaha then recounts a further tale of Soron's sanctity.

A wagtail, living on a diet of insects, died one day of indigestion. Its corpse became the plaything of thoughtless boys, who threw it into



10
The king of Kalinga visits his wife in her secluded chamber. *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya*, fol. 12. By Sahibdin. Udaipur, 1655. Gouache on paper. Photograph: W.G. Archer.

11
The royal couple travel to Soron. *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya*, fol. 15. By Sahibdin. Udaipur, 1655. Gouache on paper. Photograph: W.G. Archer.

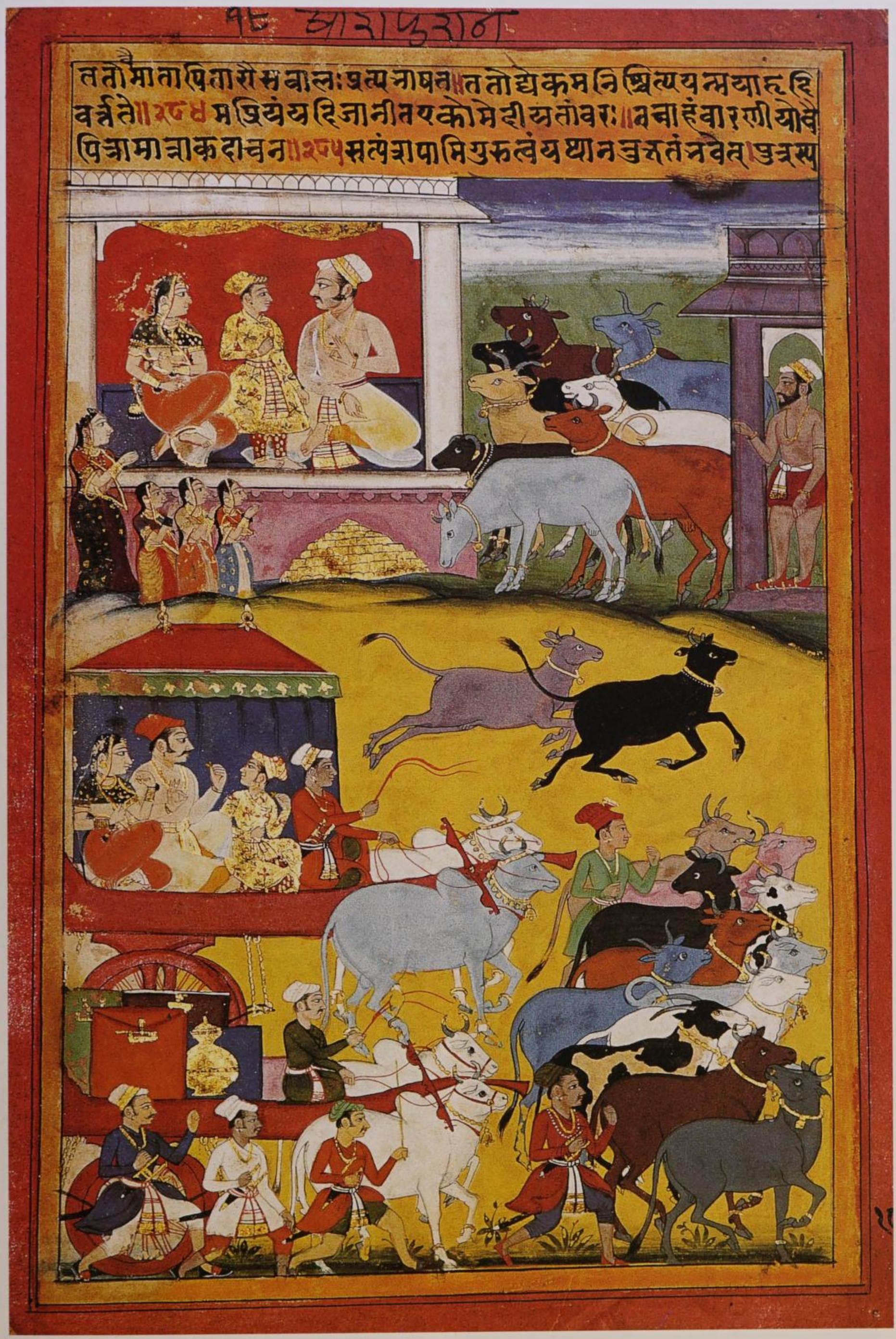
the Ganga at the holy place called Adityatirtha. As a result of this immersion, the bird was reborn as the handsome and devout son of a rich merchant family. When the boy reached the age of twelve, he told his parents of his intention to retire to Soron and worship Vishnu there. They protested, offering him instead their wealth, including 30,000 cows, to give away in charity. But the boy would not be deterred, and at last the family set off for Soron, preceded by their cows, to be offered there (figure 12). Sahibdin's painting first shows the pious youth, dressed in a princely flowered gold *jama*, addressing his bewildered parents, and below, their departure with a herd of cows and bullock-carts laden with wealth. *Arriving at the holy city, the family dispensed their cows and riches in charity to the priests.* This is shown in the foreground of Sahibdin's picture (figure 13). Above, there is an interlude in the manner of his *Rasikapriya* work, for the text relates that *it was the rainy season, in which the thunder and lightning of monsoon clouds, the fragrance of blossoming flowers, and the cries of peacocks brought pain to women separated from their lovers.* With something of his old deftness (compare figure 1), Sahibdin incorporates these conventional images of the rains into his background, with the love-god Kama aiming his flower arrow from a tree behind the central Varaha temple.

The story ends predictably. *The boy told his parents of his past life as the wagtail that had died at Soron, and he and his parents remained there in the worship of Vishnu, until they attained a heavenly rebirth.*

Conclusion: Sahibdin and His Successors

The subjects of the last few pages of the series remain uncertain.[19] The final page (figure 14) is another view of a riverside *tirtha*, with the Ganga flowing down the left side and along the bottom of the picture (as in figure 4). A Varaha temple appears, and bathing pilgrims and priests, who are perhaps being offered the elephant, horse, and cows in charity. The accompanying text (continuing on the reverse, with colophon: figure 15) is not found in the published *Varaha Purana* and may belong to a different recension.

After completing the *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya* for the Dasahra festival of 1655, Sahibdin presumably went into retirement or died, so ending a distinguished career of almost thirty years. It is not altogether surprising that



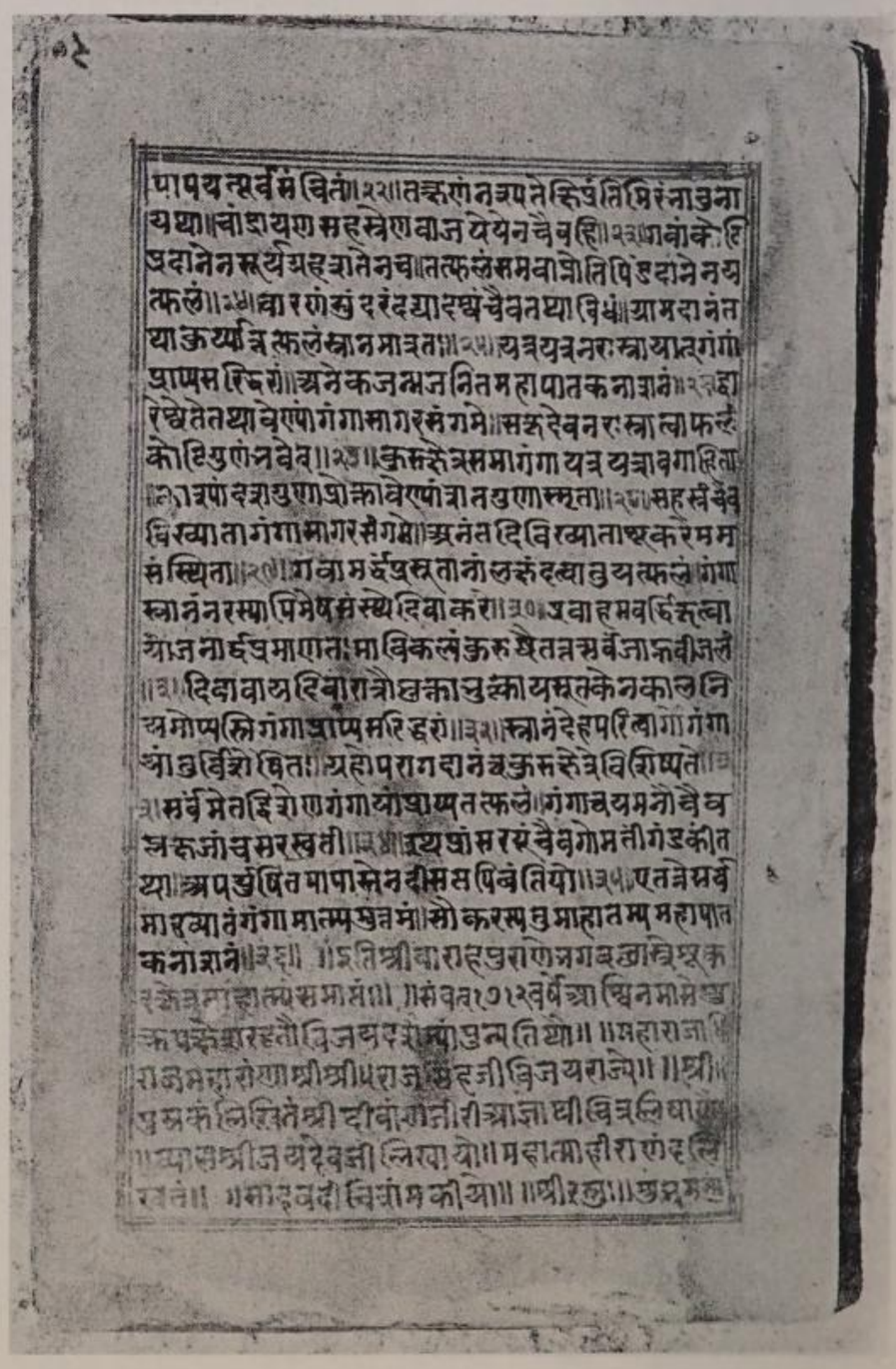
12
The merchant couple and their young son set out for Soron. *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya*, fol. 18. By Sahibdin. Udaipur, 1655. Gouache on paper. Birla collection, Calcutta.

13
The merchant family dispenses charity at Soron. *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya*, fol. 20. By Sahibdin. Udaipur, 1655. Gouache on paper. Photograph: W.G. Archer.

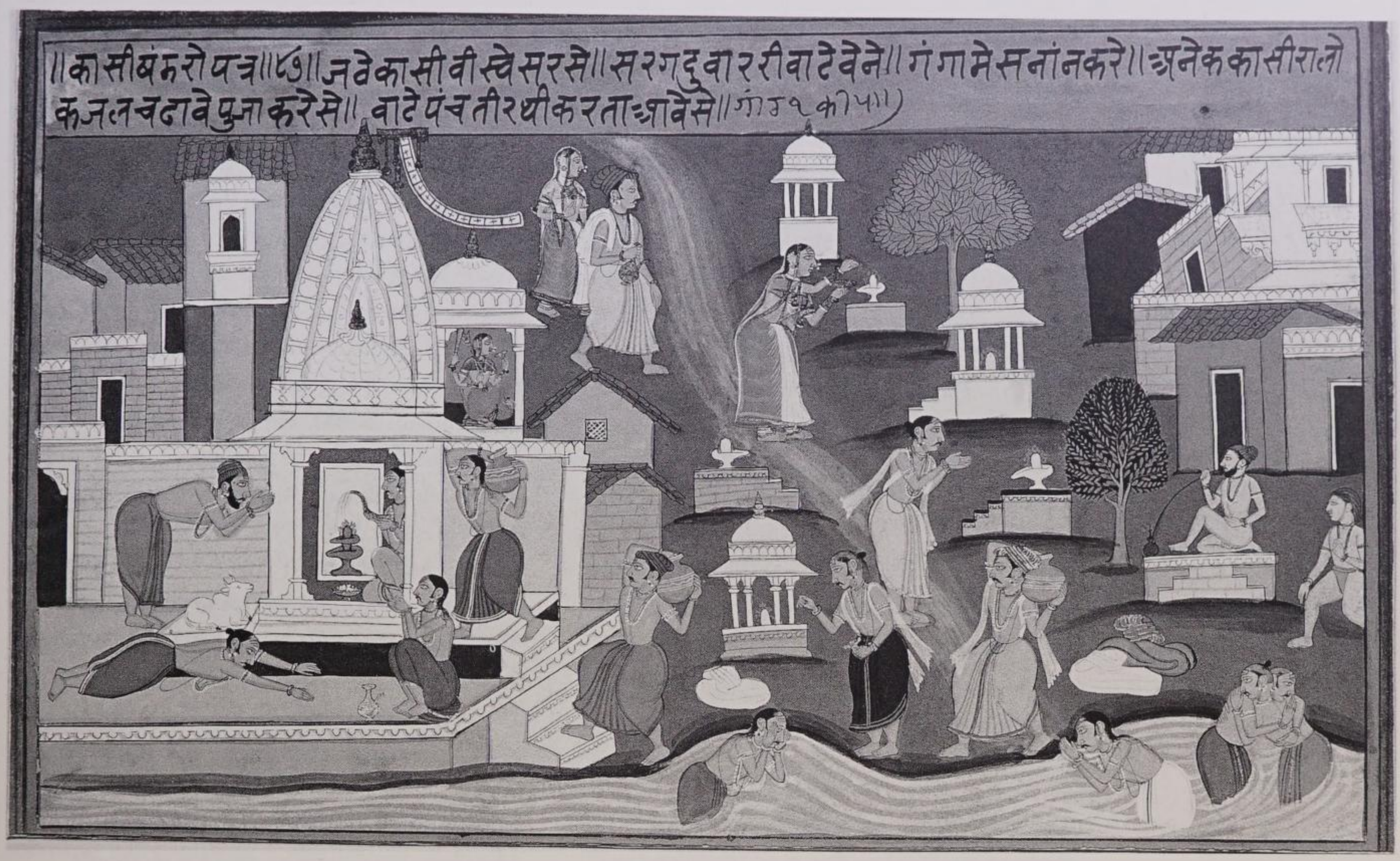
the edifying tales of the *Mahatmya* elicited from him neither the poetical flair of his early days, nor the compositional mastery and dramatic tension of his *Ramayana* work. Even so, his powers had by no means waned. His interpretation of the narrative is always sympathetic. His compositions, full-page or double-registered, convey the action fluently and often with animation. They show him recombining and elaborating his stock of imagery in a new synthesis, within a notably taller vertical format than in his early period. Sahibdin's technical range was never vast, but like all of the outstanding court artists of Mewar at different periods, he knew how to make the most of it.

Sahibdin's style became the principal model for Udaipur manuscript illustration for the rest of the seventeenth century and beyond. But none of his successors came near to approaching his imagination and facility. In the later Raj Singh and Jai Singh periods (circa

14
Pilgrims and priests at a riverside *tirtha*. Final page (fol. 26) of the *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya*. By Sahibdin. Udaipur, 1655. Gouache on paper. Photograph: W.G. Archer.



15
Reverse of folio in figure 14, with text and colophon. Photograph: W.G. Archer.



1675–95) a massive programme of manuscript illustration was undertaken which eventually debased the conventions developed by Sahibdin. Among the diverse texts illustrated in this period were one or two more *tirthamahatmya* series. A page from the *Kashi Khanda*, a section of the *Skanda Purana* praising the holy sites at Banaras, once again depicts a temple and ghats (figure 16). But here the subject has become a simple assemblage of stock elements: the *linga* shrines, priests, sadhus, and pilgrims standing in a now streaky and formulaic Ganga.

16
The Vishveshvara temple and ghats at Kashi (Banaras). From a series of the *Kashi Khanda*, fol. 97. Udaipur, circa 1690. Gouache on paper. Government Museum, Udaipur. Photograph: A. Topsfield.

NOTES

1. Often published: e.g. G.K. Kanoria, "An early dated Rajasthani ragamala", *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*, XIX, 1952–53; K. Ebeling, *Ragamala Painting*, Basel, 1973, p. 159.
2. E.g. K. Khandalavala, M. Chandra, and P. Chandra, *Miniature Paintings from the Sri Motichand Khajanchi Collection*, New Delhi, 1960, nos. 23a-i, pl. C, figs. 29-30; D. Barrett and B. Gray, *Painting of India*, Lausanne, 1963, pp. 135-37.
3. A. Topsfield, "Sahibdin's *Gita-Govinda* illustrations", *Chhavi-2: Rai Krishnadasa Felicitation Volume*, ed. A. Krishna, Benares, 1981, pp. 231-38.
4. At least two similar *Rasikapriya* series were painted by Sahibdin (and by an assistant, in some pages of the series in the Government Museum, Udaipur): A. Topsfield, "Sahibdin's illustrations to the *Rasikapriya*", *Orientations*, 17, 3, March 1986, pp. 18-31; V. Desai, "From illustrations to icons", *Indian Painting: Essays in Honour of Karl J. Khandalavala*, ed. B.N. Goswamy, New Delhi, 1995, pp. 97-127.
5. R.V. Somani, *History of Mewar*, Jaipur, 1976, pp. 268-70.
6. Royal collection, Udaipur.
7. Four of its books are preserved at Poona: K. Khandalavala, "Leaves from Rajasthan", *Marg*, IV, 3, 1950, pp. 2-24, 49-56; T. Shimizu, *The Bhagavata-Purana Miniature Paintings from the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute Manuscript Dated 1648*, Tokyo, 1993.
8. Khandalavala, op. cit., fig. 1 and pl. A; Shimizu,

op. cit., pls. 3, 123.

9. Both in the British Library, London: J.P. Losty, *The Art of the Book in India*, London, 1982, nos. 91-97; V. Dehejia, "The treatment of narrative in Jagat Singh's *Ramayana*", *Artibus Asiae*, LVI, 3/4, 1996, pp. 303-24.

10. J.P. Losty, *Indian Paintings in the British Library*, New Delhi, 1986, pl. XV; J.P. Losty, "Sahib Din's Book of Battles", *The Legend of Rama: Artistic Visions*, ed. V. Dehejia, Bombay, 1994, pp. 101-16.

11. *Varaha Purana*, ed. A.S. Gupta, tr. A. Bhattacharya, Benares, 1981, chs. 137-38.

12. Hence the name *Sukara-kshetra* (with short "u") or "place of the good deed", according to A. Cunningham, *Archaeological Survey of India Reports 1862–65*, I, Simla, 1871, p. 266. But *Sukara-* (with long "u") or *Saukara-kshetra* are more often found, meaning more appropriately "the Field of the Boar", as given e.g. by H. von Glasenapp, *Heilige Staetten Indiens*, Munich, 1928, pp. 28-29.

13. E.T. Atkinson, *Statistical, Descriptive, and Historical Account of the North-western Provinces of India*, vol. IV: Agra Division, Part 1, Allahabad, 1876, pp. 209-12. See also S.M. Bhardwaj, *Hindu Places of Pilgrimage in India*, Berkeley, 1973, pp. 72-73 (including map).

14. Our knowledge of the royal pilgrimages of the period derives from the Rajaprasasti and Jagannatha temple inscriptions: e.g. Shyamaldas, *Vir Vinod*, II, Udaipur, 1886, p. 590; A.K. Vyas, "Jagannatharaya temple inscriptions", *Epigraphia Indica*, XXIV, 1937–38, II, p. 63; S.R. Sharma, *Maharana Raj Singh and His Times*, Delhi, 1971, pp. 16-17; Somani, loc. cit.

15. Atkinson, op. cit., p. 211.

16. *Iti srivarahapurana bhagavachhastre sukaraksetramahatmyam samaptam/samvat 1712 varse asvinamase suklapakse saradrtau vijayadasamyam punyatithau/maharajadhiraja maharana sri sri 5 raja simhaji vijaya rajye/sri/pustakam likhatam sri divanaji ri ajna thi citra likhanai/vyasa sri jayadevaji likhayo/ mahatma hiranamda likhatam/sahavadi citrama kiyo/ srir astu/subham astu.* An incorrect version of this colophon is given by G.N. Sharma, *Glories of Mewar*, Jaipur, 1974, p. 95. The *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya* series is briefly listed in M.L. Menaria, *Catalogue of Manuscripts in the Library of H.H. the Maharana of Udaipur*, Udaipur, 1943, no. 1666, pp. 174-75. Two of its illustrations (fols. 9, 18) have been published, with inaccurate identification: G.N. Sharma, *Social Life in Medieval Rajasthan*, Agra, 1968, pl. 4b; K. Khandalavala and S. Doshi, *A Collector's Dream*, Bombay, 1987, p. 90. Some at least, if not all, of the 26 pages in the series are now in the B.K. Birla family collection, Calcutta. It should be stressed that the present article offers no more than a preliminary account of the series, based on a knowledge of half of its pages. I am grateful to the late Dr W.G. Archer and to Prof. Daniel J. Ehnbom for kindly allowing me to use their photographs, and to Dr James Benson for his helpful comments on the colophon.

17. J. Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, ed. W. Crooke, repr. Delhi, 1971, II, p. 683; Shyamaldas, op. cit., I, pp. 130-31.

18. National Museum, New Delhi: J. Brijbhushan, *The World of Indian Miniatures*, Tokyo, 1979, pl. 22, for a colour reproduction.

19. I am unacquainted with fols. 21-25 in particular and have not ascertained whether they might illustrate Ch. 139 of the published *Varaha Purana*, treated by its editor as a final section of the *Sukarakshetra Mahatmya*. But since its content has no specific bearing on the Soron *tirtha*s, this is perhaps unlikely. It mainly praises the use of cow-dung as a floor-covering, and the practices of floor-sweeping, devotional singing in the temple, and playing instruments and dancing. The topic of song gives rise to the story of a lowly Chandala or outcaste, whose meritorious nightly singing in the temple saves him from being devoured by a bloodthirsty *rakshasa* and even liberates the demon himself from his unhappy state.

COURT PAINTING FOR THE AMBER RULERS, CIRCA 1590–1727

Asok Kumar Das

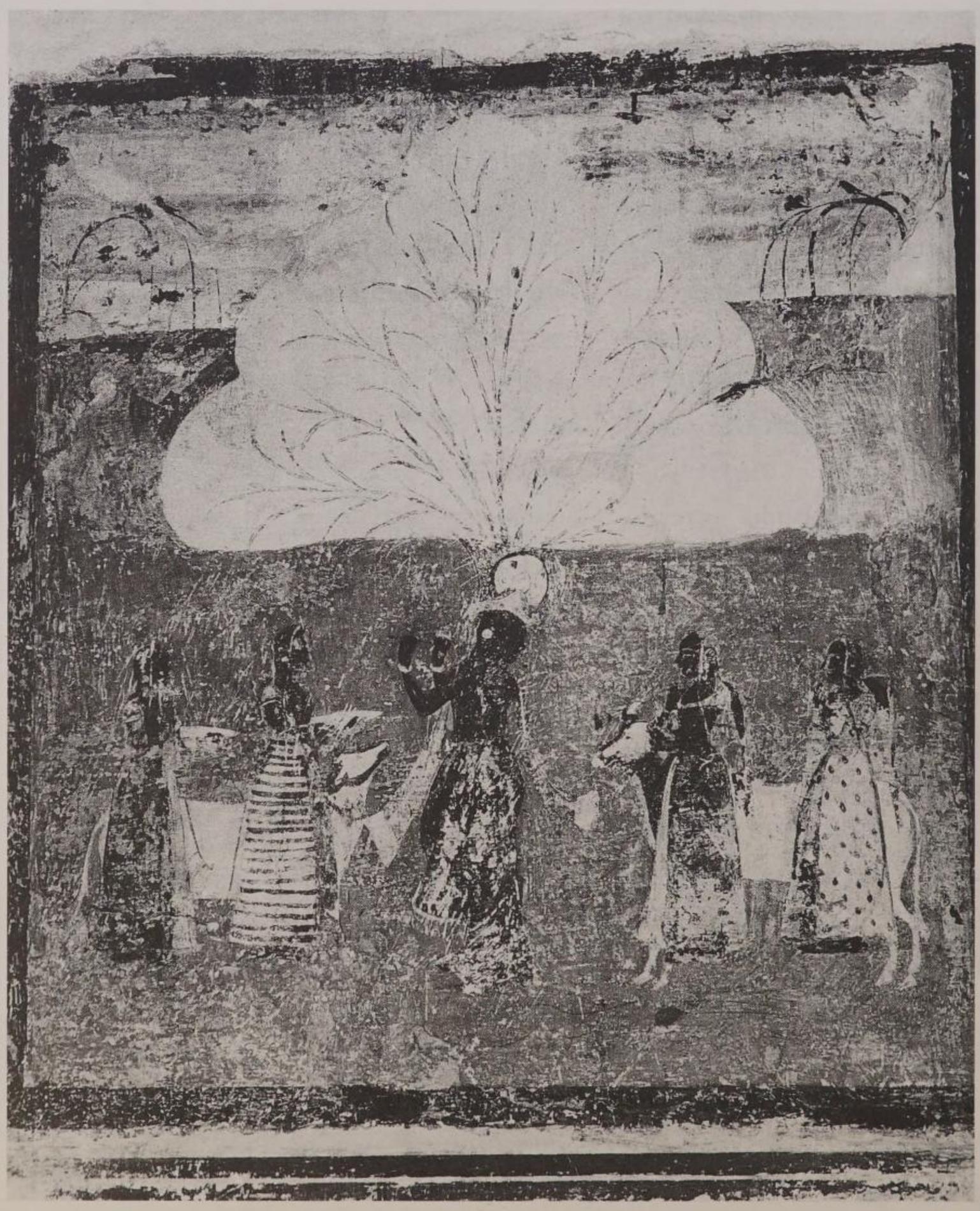
Amber was originally a minor kingdom in north-eastern Rajasthan, ruled by Kachhwaha Rajputs. It became well known only in the late sixteenth century after its rulers Bharmal and Bhagwant Das allied themselves with Emperor Akbar. Relations with the Mughal court were further strengthened by Man Singh (r. 1589–1614), and the history of Amber painting begins with his reign, as evidenced by surviving wall-paintings. Unfortunately, it must be said that Amber painting as a whole remains an area of darkness compared with the better documented schools of Mewar, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Bundi, and Kota, mainly for lack of scholarly access to the former royal collections which still lie in the storerooms of the Jaipur City Palace. Much of this present brief survey will need to be revised when these materials become available for study. What can clearly be seen, however, is the strong contrast in mid- to late-seventeenth century Amber painting between the highly refined, Mughal-inspired art of court portraiture and the continuing, robust local Rajput style of manuscript illustration and wall-painting. This reflected a tension in the rulers' own lives caused by their long, enforced absences at the Mughal court or in distant imperial postings. Only at the beginning of the eighteenth century in the reign of Sawai Jai Singh, the last Kachhwaha ruler to reside at Amber, had these very disparate styles of painting begun to converge.

Raja Man Singh (1589–1614)

Man Singh spent his first twelve years at Mozumabad, a small town near Jaipur, to nullify the effects of a bad omen in his horoscope noticed by the court astrologer. He was brought to Akbar's court by his grandfather and within a short time won the emperor's confidence through his courage and administrative skills. He acquitted himself well as governor in the troubled provinces of Kabul, Bihar, and Bengal and acquired high rank and great wealth. His adoption of the cultural tastes of Akbar's court became apparent in his activities as a prolific builder and patron of the arts. Painting activity in Man Singh's Amber already included, at a regional level, a continuation of the ancient tradition of Jain manuscript painting, patronized by Jain merchants and officials, in which the sixteenth-century northern style of Jain painting was increasingly overlaid by elements of the widespread *Chaurapanchasika* and, later, the Popular Mughal styles.[1] At the level of court patronage only wall-paintings survive, as no manuscripts or portable paintings commissioned by Man Singh have yet been found.

Man Singh early in his reign constructed a new palace in the Amber fort, and, both at Amber and while serving in eastern India, went on to build many more palaces, temples, formal gardens and pavilions, *chhatri* memorials, and other structures, such as a river ghat at Varanasi.[2] Recalled from Bengal by Jahangir, he

1
Wall-paintings below the *chajja* of the Man Singh Mahal, Amber fort, circa 1590.



2
Krishna playing the flute: wall-painting in Man Singh's private chamber, Man Singh Mahal, Amber fort, circa 1606.

spent three further productive years at Amber (1606–09), before his final posting to the Deccan. The interiors of Man Singh's buildings were in many cases richly decorated with wall-paintings, as is attested by two biographical works, both entitled *Man Charitra*, by Amrita Rai and Narottam Kavi,[3] the first composed in 1585 while Man Singh was a prince, and the second towards the end of his reign. Narottam Kavi identifies the subjects chosen for mural decoration in the Amber palaces as *ragamala, Krishnalila, Amaru Sataka*, and *nayaka-nayikabheda*, together with pictures of cranes, peafowl, parrots, and various animals and flowering plants, in bright shades of red, yellow, green, and other colours. However, centuries of neglect and whitewashing have obliterated all but a series of over a hundred small panels in the spaces between the brackets supporting the wide eaves (*chajja*) running around the courtyard of the Man Singh Mahal. These panels depict floral motifs, birds, animals, *peris* (winged angels), wrestlers, and women hunting, among other subjects (figure 1). There are also two large panels of Krishna playing the flute under a *kadamba* tree flanked by gopis, on the walls of the inner chamber of Man Singh's residence (figure 2).[4] These are in a folkish style but reveal some Popular Mughal influence. Instead of the bright hues described by the poet, the surviving panels now show only a limited colour range of lime white, red ochre, and lampblack on a pinkish ground.

The faded remains of elaborate painted decoration in the so-called Bharmal (in fact Man Singh) *chhatri*,[5] as well as in the Maqdum Shah ki Maqbara at Amber, the pavilion at Bairat,[6] and the Mozumabad palace,[7] reveal a wider range of subjects and styles and a generally improved technique. Man Singh had died at distant Elichpur in 1614, and his *chhatri* was completed in 1620. It contains a circular frieze on the lower part of the dome ceiling, divided into forty panels within graceful lobed arches. The various subjects include mythological scenes such as Krishna overcoming Kaliya, Vishnu mounted on Garuda, Sarasvati on a *hamsa*, the Matsya avatar of Vishnu, and

3
Painted interior of the dome of the Bairat pavilion, circa 1606–10.

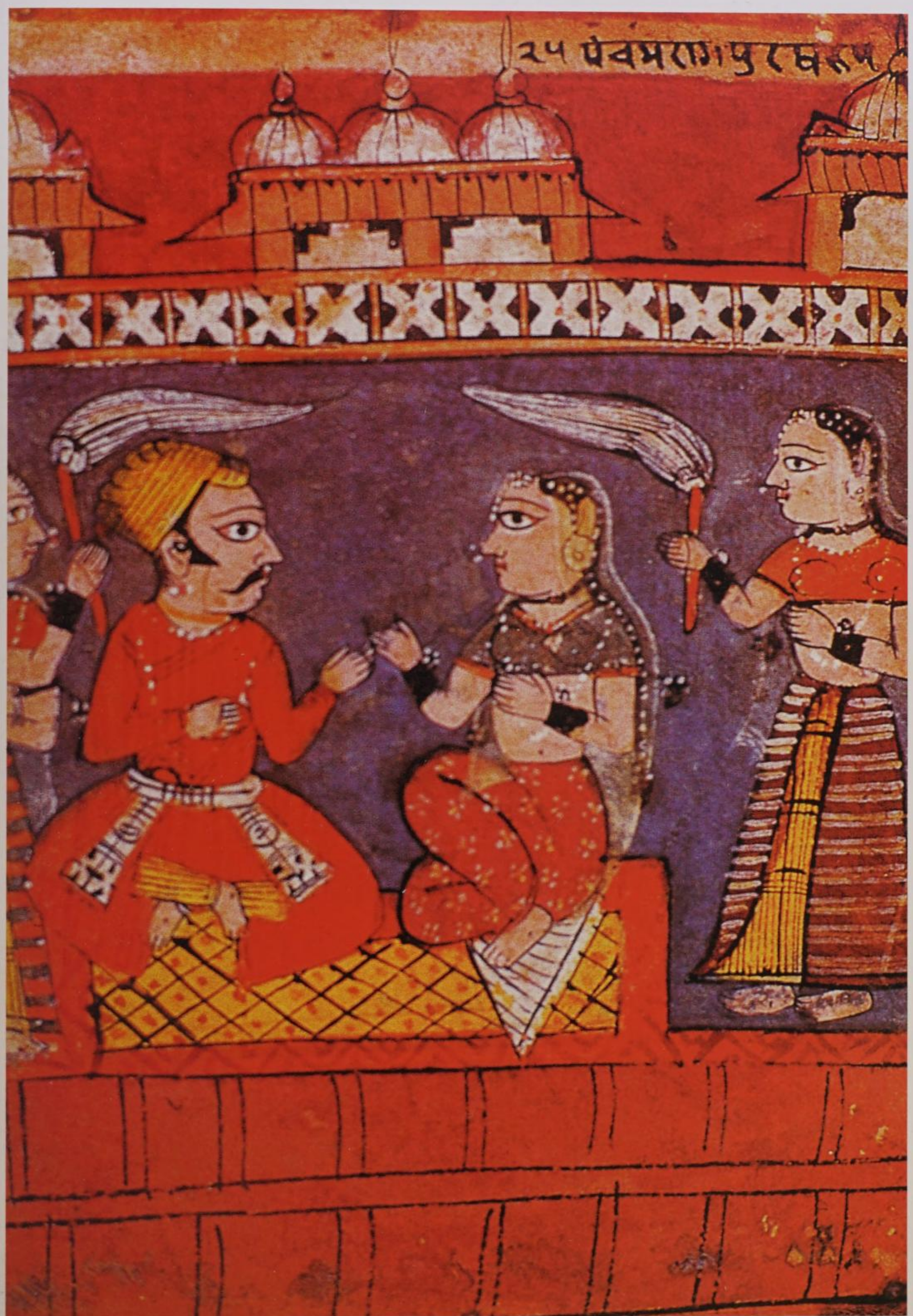
Ganesha, besides secular or poetical subjects such as a hunting cheetah and its keeper, various fighting animals, Laila and Majnun, Todi *ragini*, wrestlers, birds, and a *simurgh* (mythical animal). The pigments used, in various shades and mixtures, are *geru* (red ochre), *ramraj* (yellow ochre), *safeda* (lime white), and lampblack. In style the panels show a closer familiarity with Popular Mughal painting of the early seventeenth century, and the male and female costumes resemble contemporary court fashions.

The Maqbara also was originally richly painted both inside and outside. The interior of the flattened bulbous dome was decorated with paintings of which only a central rosette surrounded by a ring of *peri*s alternating with arabesques and medallions is faintly visible. On the outer wall it is possible to make out only a male figure wearing a *chakdar jama* (with a four-pointed hem), two female figures (one wearing a skirt-like dress, the other a long dark veil and high Chaghatai cap), and four birds in painted niches. These figures are very similar to those painted on the outer wall of the "garden pavilion" at Bairat, which was probably a domed gateway on the edge of a large tank, opening onto a causeway that leads to a garden. It was painted with carpet-like decoration and two continuous friezes alternating with decorative bands (figure 3). The lower frieze contains a procession of elephants, horses, and camels with a *palki* borne by two attendants, wrestlers, and fighting warriors. Above, a series of thirty-two panels in niches again depict various subjects such as Krishna, Ganesha, hunting scenes, a nobleman with ladies, *peri*s, trees, and vases with stylized flowers flanked by cranes or other birds.[8]

Man Singh was perhaps the first Amber ruler to start a royal *pothikhana* or manuscript studio and depository, where, as at the Mughal court, poets, writers, calligraphers, painters, and bookbinders worked together. He also collected a large number of manuscripts from various places.[9] Although portraits of Man Singh, his son Jagat Singh, and grandson Maha Singh have been found in the City Palace and elsewhere, there is no record of any painters working in the Mughal style at Amber at this period. The best known portraits of Man Singh are Mughal ones, from the Khurram and Nasr al-din Albums.[10] The latter example, by Payag, was later imitated by Amber portrait painters. However, a portrait of Man Singh's younger son Bhao Singh, who succeeded him (r. 1614–21), appears to be a product of the local Amber studio.[11] Though confidently drawn, it lacks the finish of the best Mughal portraits.

Mirza Raja Jai Singh (r. 1621–67)

The reign of Mirza Raja Jai Singh inaugurated a new cultural phase at Amber. He enjoyed great power under both Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb and was one of the most cultured men of the age. The Amber fort was enriched with new palace buildings and gardens of classical Mughal design, lavishly decorated in the finest Shah Jahani tradition. Jai Singh was also a generous patron of art and literature. Renowned authors such as Bihari Das, who wrote his celebrated *Satsai* at Amber between 1661–67, adorned his court.[12] An earlier poetical work, the *Rasikapriya* of Kesav Das, also remained popular at Amber as elsewhere, and a copy was written there in 1639 for Chandravatji, queen of Jai Singh, with two very folkish illustrations.[13] Two mid-seventeenth century pages from another copy,[14] however, reveal some familiarity with the earlier, dispersed "Boston" *Rasikapriya* in a refined Popular Mughal style, which has also been attributed recently to the Amber studio,[15] but the superior technique and soft palette of the Boston series are lacking. *Ragamala* was another favourite subject of the seventeenth-century Rajasthani schools, but no dated Amber series of this



4
Pancham *ragini*, from a dispersed *ragamala*. Amber, circa 1650. Gouache on paper. Sangram Singh family collection, Jaipur.

5
Mirza Raja Jai Singh presenting a *sarpech* to his son Prince Ram Singh. Amber, circa 1655. Partially coloured drawing on paper; 26.2 x 18.0 cm. Chester Beatty Library, Dublin. Reproduced by kind permission of the Trustees o the Chester Beatty Library.

period has yet been found, though it is likely that a number of known stray pages were painted there.[16] These vary in style from early, more or less Popular Mughal-influenced works[17] to a naive, mid-seventeenth century local style with short, thickset figures (figure 4), recalling the style of the 1639 *Rasikapriya*.

Such works stand in marked stylistic contrast to the Amber royal portraits following the imperial Mughal style. The finest of these is the joint portrait of Mirza Raja Jai Singh and Maharaja Gaj Singh of Jodhpur, in Los Angeles.[18] Its setting includes the most luxurious trappings and is comparable in finish with the finest Mughal portraits. It is doubtful that a portrait of two vassal rulers seated on such a large throne, on a rare blue-ground arabesque pile carpet under a canopy of costliest Safavid figured velvet, would have been an imperial commission. Glynn and Smart have plausibly attributed it to a Mughal-trained artist working for Mirza Raja Jai Singh, who was also a renowned collector of Mughal and Persian carpets and textiles.

Other strongly Mughal-influenced portraits of Jai Singh and his son Prince Ram Singh are more likely works of the mid-seventeenth century royal studio, by Mughal-trained artists either working at Amber or in the ruler's entourage while he was serving in distant provinces, since Jai Singh – like his contemporary Jaswant Singh of Jodhpur, another important Rajput patron of portraiture – spent much of his career far from home in the imperial service. A partly coloured study of Jai Singh seated on a throne bestowing a *sarpech* (turban ornament) on his son Ram Singh, inscribed with their names in Persian, is of exceptionally fine quality (figure 5).[19]

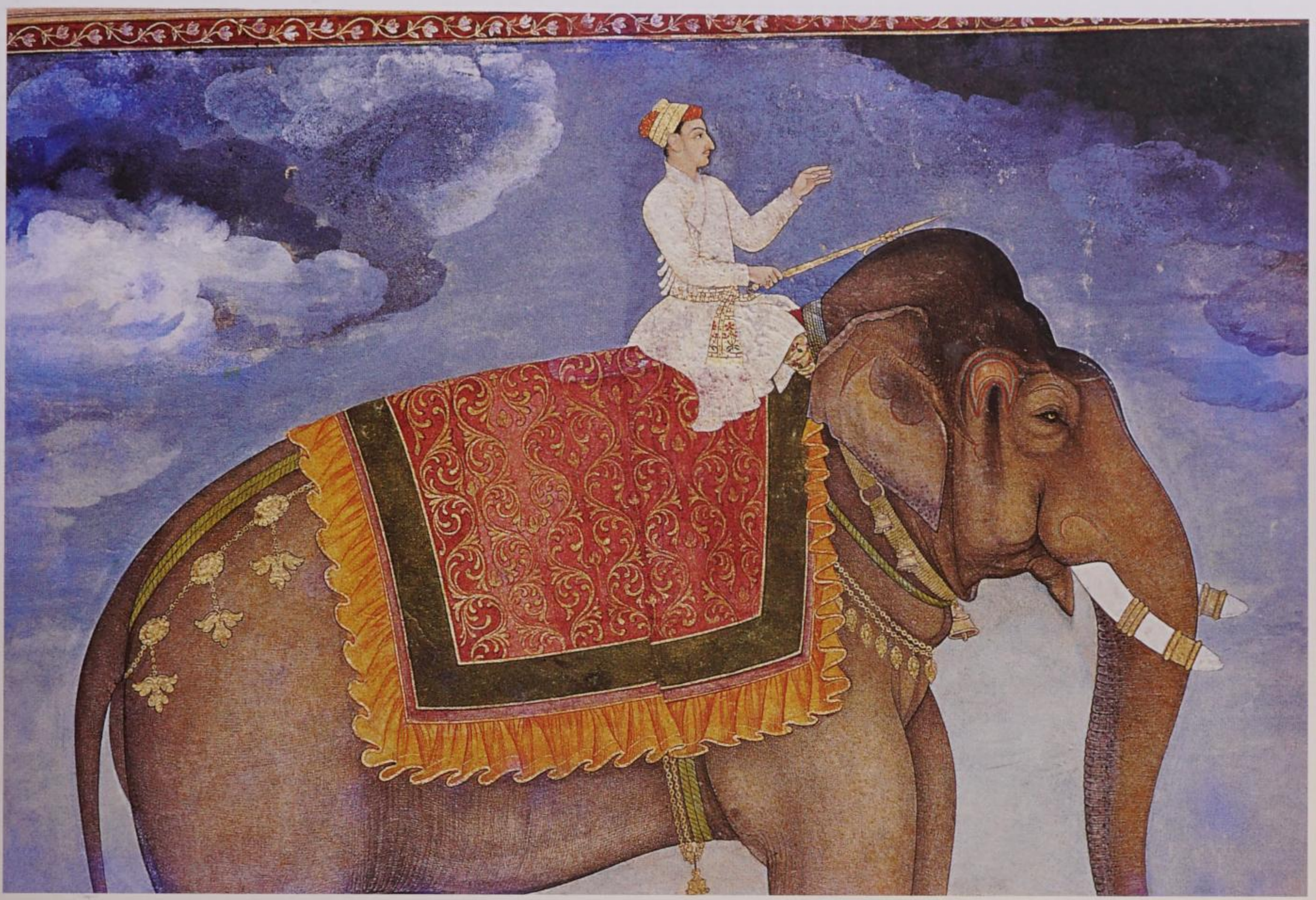
Two portraits of Jai Singh at an advanced age show him in each case similarly dressed and facing left with his hands placed on his sword hilt. One, in Berlin (figure 6), is inscribed with his name and depicts him in a landscape with small flowering plants, wearing an opulent costume and jewellery. The other, in the Benkaim collection, appears to be based on the same *charba* (tracing).[20] Both seem to have been painted towards the end of Jai Singh's life. Censured by Aurangzeb after a disastrous campaign against Bijapur, Jai Singh died a broken man in 1667.

6
Mirza Raja Jai Singh in old age. Amber, circa 1667. Gouache on paper; 18.4 x 10.8 cm. Islamisches Museum, Berlin.

Ram Singh I (r. 1667–89)

Ram Singh also was a man of high accomplishments and a keen patron and collector.[21] Born in 1635, he spent much of his princely life at Aurangzeb's court, until his disgrace following the escape of the Maratha leader Shivaji from captivity. As ruler after Jai Singh's death, Ram Singh in his turn had to spend long periods in the inhospitable regions of Assam and the northwest. A number of portraits of him are known, more often as a prince than as ruler. A delightful portrait of the young prince in his early teens, in a private collection,[22] originally came from the Amber Album, of which many known pages show Amber princes and their contemporaries. The album seems to have reached the Mewar court as a result of Sawai Jai Singh's alliance with Maharana Amar Singh II (r. 1698–1710). A Mughal portrait of Prince Ram Singh, mounted on a page from the Late Shah Jahan Album, shows him at a slightly older age.[23] Further Amber portraits of the prince show him more informally, with his ladies in the zenana in an almost *ragamala*-like composition,[24] at his private worship on a garden terrace (figure 7),[25] or standing alone in a flowered robe on a hillock in a landscape.[26] It was

7
Prince Ram Singh at worship. Amber, circa 1660. Gouache on paper; 17 x 12 cm (without the later enlargement of the picture surface). Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.



8
Prince Kishan Singh riding a royal elephant (detail). Mughal style under Amber patronage, circa 1675. Gouache on paper. Private collection.

probably under Ram Singh also that a stylistic integration began to develop of the hitherto relatively crude local style of manuscript illustration with the more refined techniques deriving from Mughal portraiture. A number of *ragamala* pages are known in which the heroes appear to resemble Ram Singh or other princes.

Ram Singh's gifted son Kishan Singh (born 1654), who was to predecease him, also made his mark early as a warrior in the imperial service. A superb portrait of the young prince mounted on an elephant, following contemporary Mughal models and in the best imperial style, is found in an album in a private collection (figure 8). From Amber itself, an interesting document in the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum is Kishan Singh's horoscope, which is of prodigious length (139 metres long, 33 centimetres wide) and liberally illustrated with figures of planets, stars, deities, and other subjects including a portrait of the prince himself.[27] The pictures are of a coarse quality and are undoubtedly of contemporary Amber origin. It is ironic that the prince for whom this largest of horoscopes was prepared died at the age of only twenty-seven. Ram Singh was heartbroken at the death of his gifted son. When he too died at distant Kohat in 1689 the *gaddi* passed to his young grandson Bishan Singh.

Bishan Singh (1689–99)

At least two portraits of Bishan Singh are known at present, as well as a fragmentary manuscript treatise on massage,[28] prepared for him in 1692, which seems also to depict him. Its illustrations show a fair-complexioned prince resembling the youthful Raja with his dark masseur, wearing

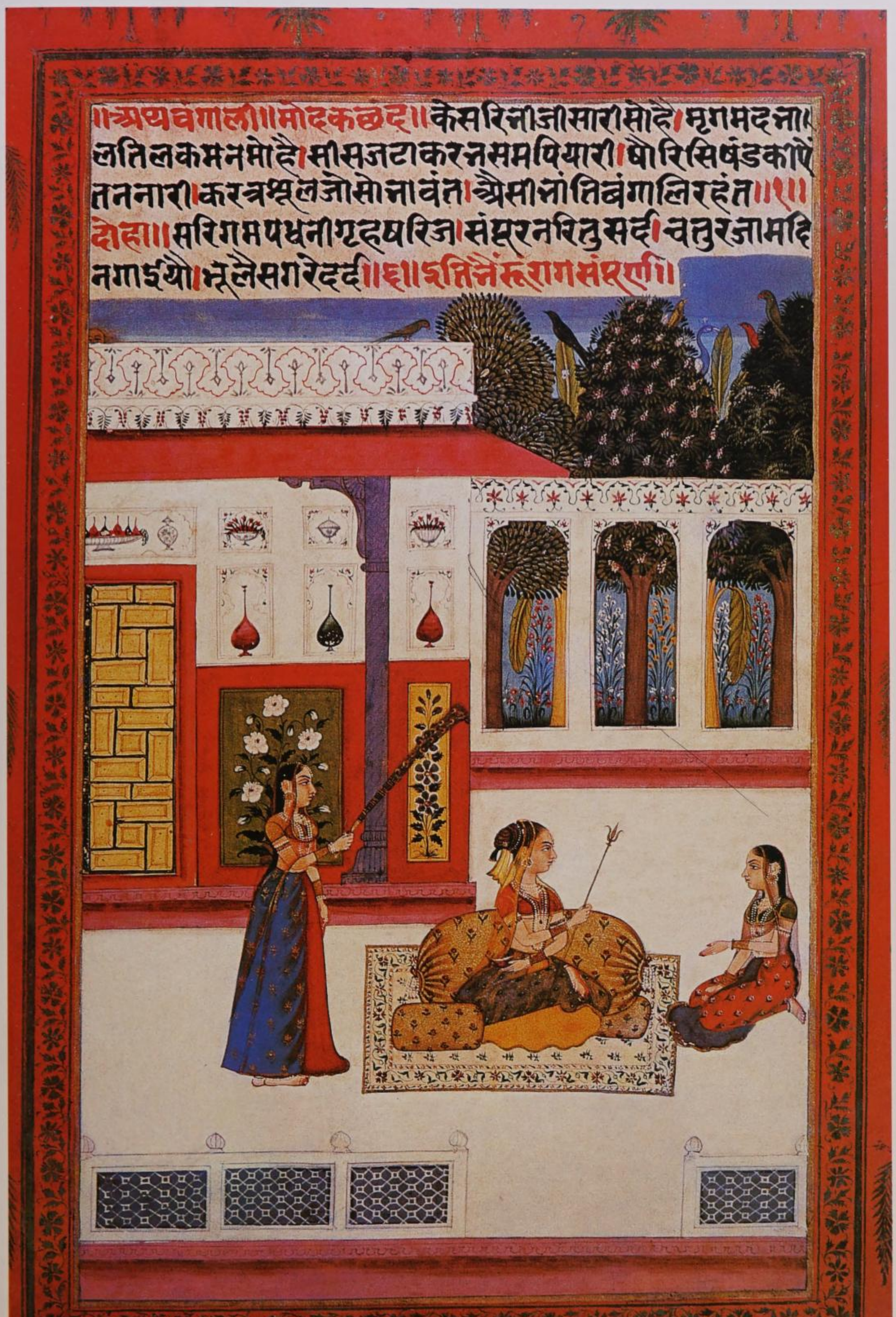
only a loincloth. They include no other figures or background detail and so throw little light on the development of the Amber style during his short reign. Of the two known portraits, one is a crisply executed study by Ustad Gulab Rai.[29] Nothing else is known of this painter, although with the rank of Ustad he must clearly have been a Mughal master of some standing. The other, in the local Amber style under Mughal influence, shows Bishan Singh on horseback hawking in a marshy terrain, with numerous retainers.[30] Bishan Singh in turn died in the snowbound hills of the northwest on December 31, 1699 at the age of twenty-seven, and was succeeded by his eleven-year-old son Jai Singh.

Sawai Jai Singh (1699–1743)

The more long-lived Sawai Jai Singh was to become one of the most successful and influential of all the Kachhwaha rulers. His honorific title Sawai, meaning "one and one-fourth", was granted by Aurangzeb. After the Emperor's death Jai Singh was able to take political advantage of the instability at Delhi. He was moreover a committed patron of art and architecture, while his intellectual interests extended to religion, philosophy, and literature, as well as science and astronomy. The most far-reaching among his many enterprises was the foundation of the new, planned city of Jaipur, a few miles from Amber, in 1727. After the removal of the court to this new capital, the Amber fort, like Akbar's Fatehpur Sikri before it, gradually turned into a ghost city.

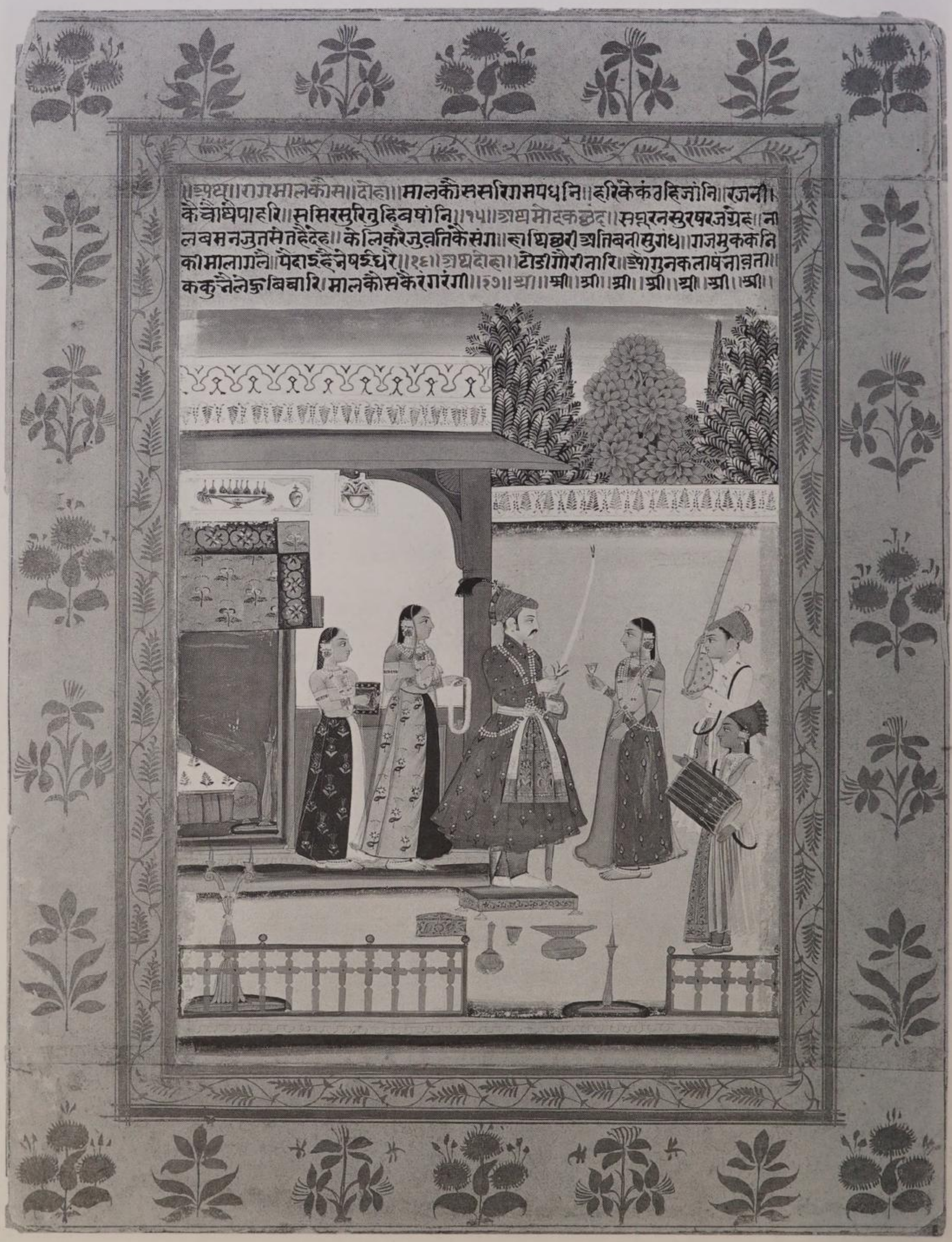
An important set of paintings from Jai Singh's reign is the *ragamala* in the Kankroli art collection (figure 9), with a colophon stating that it was prepared at Amber fort in 1709.[31] This is the earliest dated *ragamala* known from the Amber-Jaipur school. Besides this set, at least five *ragamala* series of the same period show similar late Mughal columns and arches, dados decorated with large flowering plants, pinkish-brown eaves with blue geometrical motifs, and flat-roofed open pavilions recalling the garden pavilion in the eastern part of the Jaigarh fort added by Sawai Jai Singh. The principal male figure often resembles the youthful ruler, while the female figures are characteristically tall and slender and vary from fair to dark in complexion. The finest and probably the earliest set in the group is now dispersed.[32] In Malkauns *raga*, one of its finest pages (figure 10), the hero resembles portraits of Sawai Jai Singh as a young man (figure 11).[33] He stands on a golden footstool holding a floral wand, accompanied by three wives, Todi, Gauri, and Kakubha *raginis*, as given in the inscription above. The Kankroli and other sets seem to derive from this series, but in their drawing and colouring appear to be the work of lesser artists painting at a more hurried pace, as seen in stray pages in the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum and Sangram Singh collection (figure 12), or the twelve-folio set in the Baroda Museum.[34] A few folios of a damaged and dispersed *Baramasa Sadrituvarnan* series and two *Nayikabheda* pages belong to the same style and period.[35]

Towards the end of Sawai Jai Singh's reign there was a further access of Mughal influence at Amber. Court records in the Rajasthan State Archives at Bikaner indicate that he brought two painters from Delhi, Fazl Muhammad and Sadiq Muhammad. This was probably after 1717 when he first visited the imperial court. No signed works by them have been found, but they would undoubtedly have contributed to the albums compiled for Sawai Jai Singh.[36] One of these, procured in the sixth year of Farrukhsiyyar's reign at the high cost of Rs 600, had originally contained paintings of bird, animal, fruit, and flower subjects and twenty-one pages of calligraphy. Jai Singh had the calligraphic pages replaced with subjects of women, yoginis, and genre scenes. A painting of

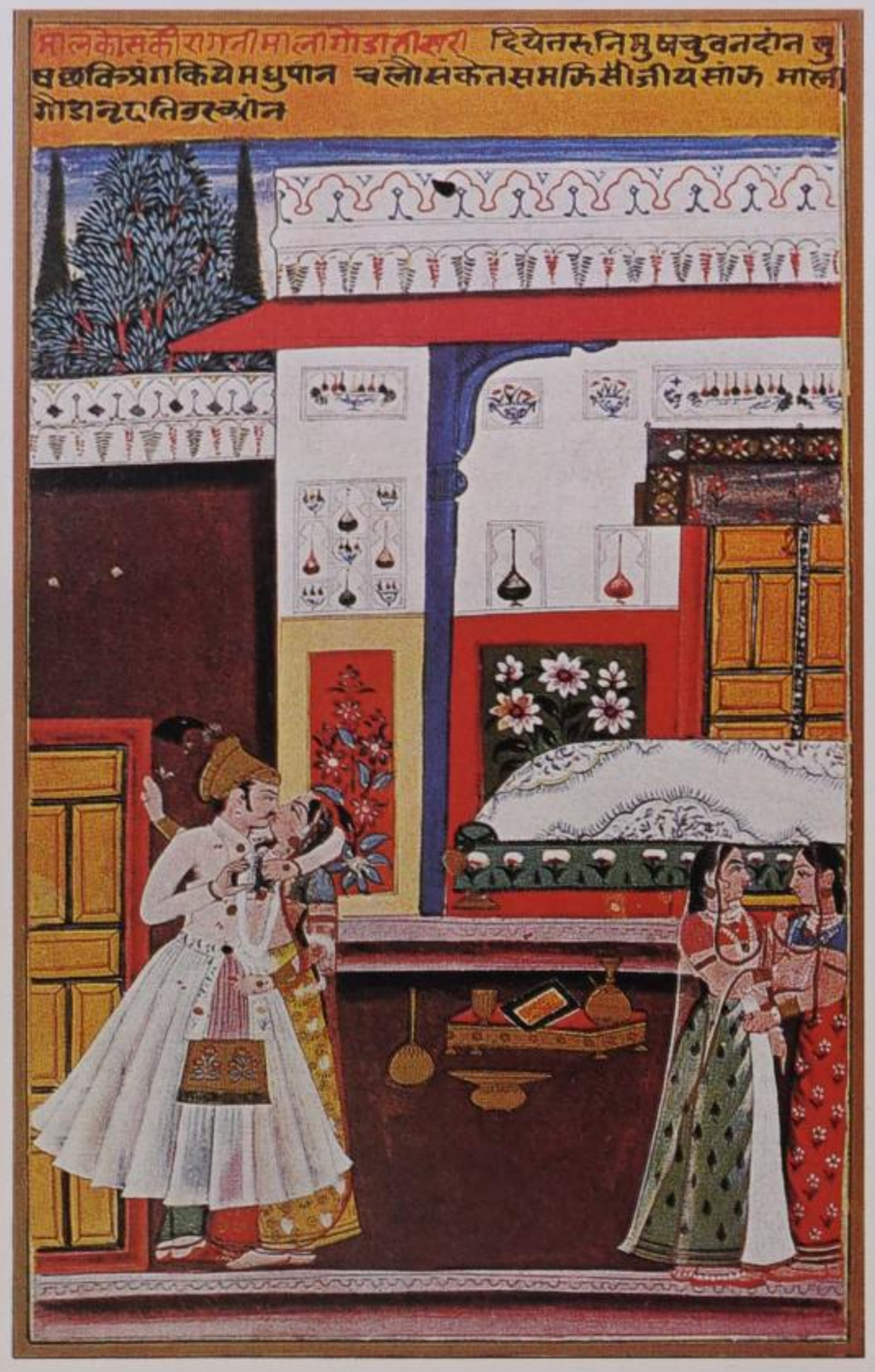


9
Bangali *ragini*. Amber, 1709. Gouache on paper; 28 x 18 cm. Maharaja of Kankroli collection, Baroda.

10
Malkauns *raga*, from a dispersed *ragamala*. Amber, circa 1705. Opaque watercolour on paper with gold and silver; 31.7 x 20.8 cm. Brooklyn Museum, New York. Gift of Mr Ashok K. Mehra.



11
Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh
riding with attendants.
Amber, circa 1705–10.
Gouache on paper. Victoria
& Albert Museum, London.



12
Malavi *ragini*. Amber, circa 1705–10. Gouache on paper. Sangram Singh family collection, Jaipur.

13
Yogini seated under a tree. Amber, VS 1782 (1725). Gouache on paper. Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum, Jaipur (no. AG 935).

a yogini seated under a tree in a landscape (figure 13) is dated 1725.[37] It is clearly the work of a competent Mughal-trained artist working at Amber shortly before its abandonment by Sawai Jai Singh and his successors for the new capital of Jaipur.

NOTES

1. Three Digambar Jain illustrated manuscripts from the Amber region in his reign are: two MSS of the *Yashodharacharita*, written at Amber in 1590 and 1591, and an *Adipurana* written at Mozumabad in 1606. See respectively: K. Khandalavala and S. Doshi, "Miniature paintings", *Jaina Art and Architecture*, ed. A. Ghosh, III, New Delhi, 1975, p. 426, pl. 283b, and R.V. Somani, "Survey of Jain paintings from Rajasthan", *Mahavir Jayanti Smarika*, Jaipur, 1980, p. 19; S. Doshi, *Masterpieces of Jain Painting*, Bombay, 1985, p. 70, pp. 138-39 (fig. 13) for the 1590 MS, and pp. 70 (figs. 6, 7), 71 (fig. 9), and 87 (fig. 2) for the 1606 *Adipurana*, whose completed pages are by at least two painters, working in varying *Chaurapanchasika* and Popular Mughal-influenced styles. A later *Yashodharacharita* MS from the region was written by an Ajmer scribe at Jobner in 1636, and again reveals a liberal absorption of the Popular Mughal style: S. Doshi, op. cit., pp. 70, 138-39 (fig. 9).
2. R.N. Prasad, *Raja Man Singh of Amber*, Calcutta, 1966, pp. 146-70; C. Asher, "Sub-imperial patronage: The architecture of Raja Man Singh", *The Powers of Art: Patronage in Indian Culture*, ed. B.S. Miller, New Delhi, 1992, pp. 183-201; idem, *Architecture of Mughal India: New Cambridge History of India*, I, 4, Cambridge, 1992, pp. 67-74.
3. G.N. Bahura, *Literary Heritage of the Rulers of Amber and Jaipur*, Jaipur, 1976, pp. 33-34; idem, "Amer sthita Man Singh Mahal ke Bhittichitra", *The Researcher (A Bulletin of Rajasthan's Archaeology and Museums)*, XII-XIII, Jaipur, 1972–73, pp. 63-70.
4. Hot Chand, "Conservation of wall-paintings at Amber palaces", *The Researcher*, XII-XIII, 1972–73, pp. 59-62 and figs.
5. K. Khandalavala, *Wall Paintings from Amber*, New Delhi, 1974; R.K. Vashistha, "An inscription on Raja Man Singh's memorial at Amber", *Lalit Kala*, 20, 1982, p. 37.
6. H. Goetz, "The Early Rajput murals of Bairat", *Ars Orientalis*, I, 1954, pp. 113-18, pls. XXXVII-XXXIX.

7. However the wall-paintings in a chamber at Mozumabad have all but disappeared, leaving only traces of birds, animals, courtiers, elephant fights, and hunting scenes, in a comparable style to the Amber murals discussed here.

8. There are also four smaller pavilions at the four corners, two containing traces of paintings in the four segments of the cross-vaulted dome. A heavily built nobleman is shown in three panels in one of these corner vaults, with Krishna in the fourth; on two of the panels of another pavilion Akbar is shown seated on a low throne with an attendant, and being entertained by female musicians and dancers or offered drink and *pan* and a waist-sash. A third scene shows a man shaking a tree (alluding to a Mahabharata story of Bhima), and a fourth Laila and Majnun. The dome ceiling here was finely decorated with medallions, floral and arabesque motifs, and *peris*, in a manner comparable to Akbar's mausoleum at Sikandra and other monuments of Jahangir's reign.

9. Bahura, op. cit., pp. 29-34. These acquisitions by Man Singh, who was a devout Hindu, probably include an important unpublished MS of the *Bhagavata Purana*, now in the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum, Jaipur, which was written in 1598 (VS 1655) for an affluent businessman of Lahore, Banamali Das, with nearly a thousand illustrations by Govinda Das, son of Narada. Some stray folios of a *Gita Govinda* by the same artist or in a similar style of the early seventeenth century have also been found in the *pothikhana*: K. Vatsyayan, *Miniatures of the Gita-Govinda*, Jaipur, 1980.

10. S.C. Welch, *India: Art and Culture*, New York, 1985, no. 107 (Metropolitan Museum no. 1982.174); L. Leach, *Mughal and Other Indian Paintings from the Chester Beatty Library*, London, 1994, I, no. 3.31.

11. J. Losty, *Indian Book Painting*, London, 1986, no. 47; T. Falk and M. Archer, *Indian Miniatures in the India Office Library*, London, 1981, no. 44 (not illus.).

12. Several unillustrated MSS of the *Satsai* are found in the *pothikhana*; Bahura, op. cit., pp. 38-42. A single illustrated folio found by Bahura points to the commissioning of such a copy which is now lost: G.N. Bahura and C. Singh, "Some illustrated Rajasthani manuscripts from the Maharaja Man Singh II Museum", *Art Heritage*, 2, New Delhi, n.d., fig. 6. H. Goetz, "The Kachhwaha school of Rajput painting", *Bulletin of the Baroda Museum*, IV, 1-2, 1946–47, p. 39, fig. 9, noticed an illustrated copy of the *Satsai* in the Mandhata Singh collection, Bikaner, dated 1647–49, but this illustration appears to be of a later date.

13. A.K. Das, "Miniatures", in *Homage to Jaipur*, ed. M.R. Anand, Bombay, 1977, fig. 3.

14. Bahura and Singh, op. cit., fig. 7.

15. M.C. Beach, *Mughal and Rajput Painting: New Cambridge History of India*, I:3, Cambridge, 1992, p. 185. For the Boston *Rasikapriya*, see A.K. Coomaraswamy, *Catalogue of the Indian Collections in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, VI, Cambridge, Mass., 1930, pls. VIII-XIX.

16. In the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum, the Jaipur City Palace private collection, and the late Kumar Sangram Singh family collection.

17. Bahura and Singh, op. cit., fig. 1, a folio of Gauda *ragini* (Pothikhana collection), in a style not far removed from the Amber and Bairat wall-paintings. A more strongly sub-imperial set attributable to Amber is known from four pages: P. Pal, *Indian Painting*, I, Los Angeles, 1993, no. 90; idem, *Indo-Asian Art from the John Gilmore Ford Collection*, Baltimore, 1971, no. 31. This set was clearly prepared for a patron close to the Mughal court, such as Madho Singh, the younger brother of Man Singh, whose house at Agra was a centre of musical culture, or possibly even Mirza Raja Jai Singh himself.

18. Los Angeles County Museum of Art: in spite of its Devanagari inscription, the portrait of Jai Singh was long misidentified as Shah Shuja', until Catherine Glynn and Ellen Smart's recent corrective article: "A Mughal icon re-examined", *Artibus Asiae*, 57, 1/2, 1997, pp. 5-15.

19. L. Leach, op. cit., II, no. 10.18.

20. C. Glynn, "Evidence of royal painting for the Amber court", *Artibus Asiae*, 56, 1/2, 1996, fig. 11 (identified there as a portrait of Ram Singh).

21. Bahura, op. cit., pp. 42ff.

22. Glynn, op. cit., fig. 1.

23. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts: ibid., fig. 2. Another fine portrait of Ram Singh, in the Jaipur City Palace, is unpublished.

24. Prince of Wales Museum, Mumbai: ibid., fig. 4.

25. Ibid., fig. 6; A.Topsfield, *Indian Paintings from*

Oxford Collections, Oxford, 1994, no. 18.

26. Private collection: Glynn, op. cit., fig. 5. I would however tend to disagree with Glynn's identification as Ram Singh of her fig. 7 (the subject is bearded, and no Amber prince is known to have grown a beard), and possibly fig. 8. The subject of her group of hunting pictures (figs. 12–15) is very probably not Ram Singh, as his name is not known to appear in the form Ram Chand in any court record, genealogy, or Mughal chronicle. This figure seems instead to have been an art-loving Thakur or nobleman.

27. Das, "Miniatures", p. 79, fig. 6. Also connected with Kishan Singh is the same Museum's copy of *Rasapradipa Tika*, a Marathi commentary on the *Sangita Ratnakara* by Nur Khan, written at Jaisinghpura (on the outskirts of Aurangabad) in 1679, with four paintings by two different mid-sixteenth century Deccani artists: ibid., figs. 7 and 8.

28. In the City Palace, Jaipur; unpublished.

29. Falk and Archer, op. cit., no. 135.

30. In the City Palace, Jaipur; unpublished.

31. S. Andhare, "A dated Amber ragamala", *Lalit Kala*, 15, 1972, pp. 47-51; K. Ebeling, *Ragamala Painting*, Basel, 1973, set no. 46 et var. loc. Bahura, op. cit., p. 70, speculates that it may have travelled to Kankroli through the guru of Sawai Madho Singh I (r. 1750–67), who was a follower of the Vallabhacharya Sampradaya at Kankroli.

32. Goetz, "Kachhwaha school", pls. 8-9; idem, *Art and Architecture of Bikaner State*, Oxford, 1950, pl. 94; S. Czuma, *Indian Art from the George P. Bickford Collection*, Cleveland, 1975, no. 97; Leach, *Indian Miniature Paintings*, pp. 167-69; A. Poster, *Realms of Heroism*, Brooklyn, 1994, nos. 101-02; S. Doshi, ed., *The Royal Bequest: Art Treasures in the Baroda Museum and Picture Gallery*, Bombay, 1995, p. 89.

33. Also Das, "Miniatures", pl. 3, a portrait in the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum.

34. O.C. Gangoly, *Critical Catalogue of Miniature Paintings in the Baroda Museum*, Baroda, 1961, pp. 152-53, pl. XLIIa; Ebeling, op. cit., col. pls. 13, 27; S. Singh, *Exhibition of Dhundhar Painting*, Jaipur, 1977, nos. 5-8, pl. 8; Das, "Miniatures", pl. 2, idem, *Treasures of Indian Painting*, V, Jaipur, 1986, pl. I. For two further similar sets see Ebeling, set nos. 44, 49.

35. Coomaraswamy, *Catalogue*, op. cit., V, pls. CIV-CV; Bahura and Singh, op. cit., fig. 7; V.P. Dwivedi, *Baramasa Painting*, New Delhi, 1980, pl. 117.

36. Sangram Singh, op. cit., p. 2, notes that Sawai Jai Singh had a painter called Muhammad Shah who illustrated a "manuscript on Krishna" which is now dispersed, but no further details are given.

37. A.K. Das, "Notes on an Aurangzeb period album of bird and animal paintings", *Indian Painting: Essays in Honour of Karl J. Khandalavala*, eds. B.N. Goswamy and U. Bhatia, New Delhi, 1995, pp. 72-73.

THE UMARANI USTA MASTER-PAINTERS OF BIKANER AND THEIR GENEALOGY

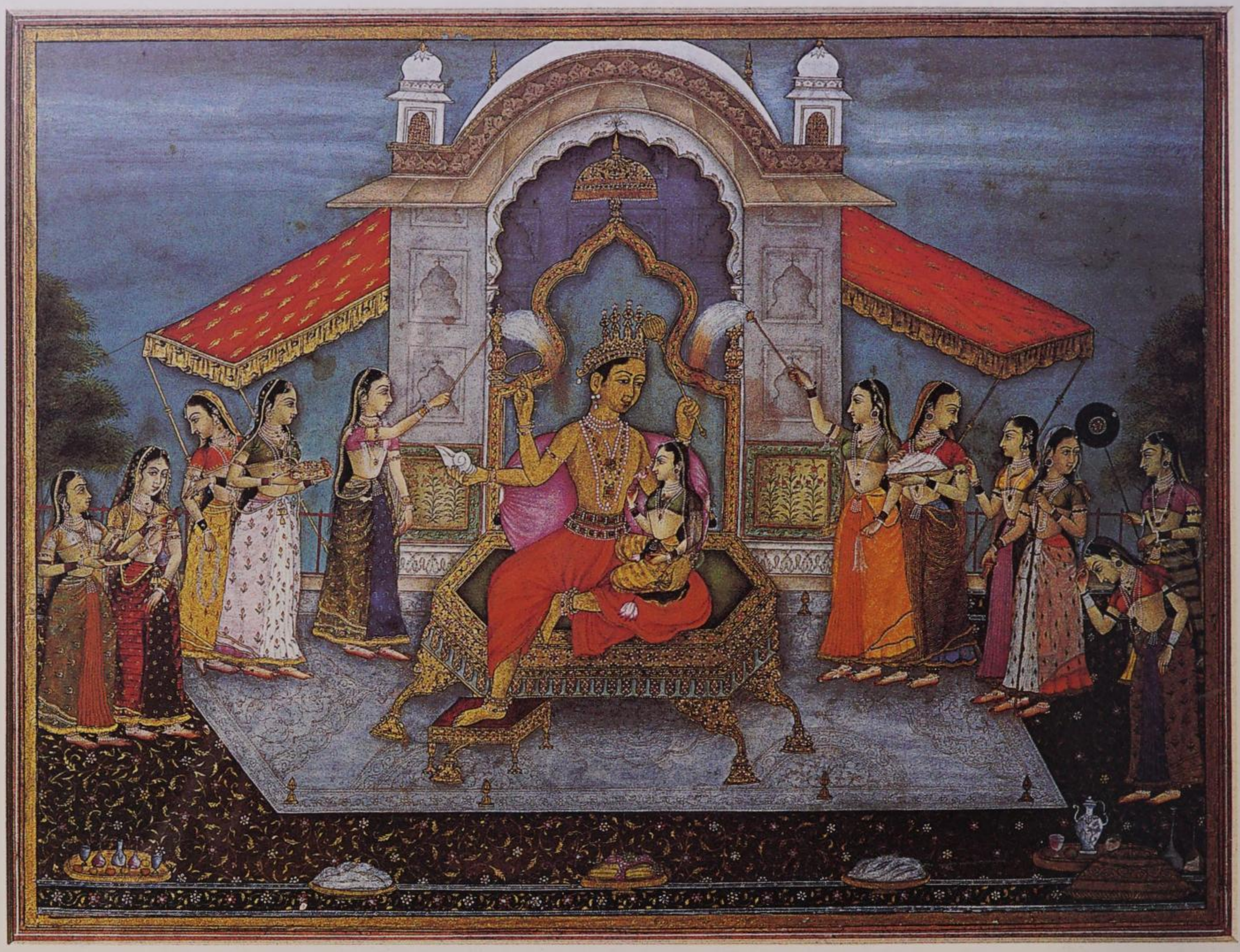
Naval Krishna

The Umarani Ustas ("sons of Umar") formed an important branch (*dhura*) – the Lalani Ustas, "sons of Lal", were another – of the Usta (sometimes associated with *Ustad* or "master") professional caste of artists which served the court of Bikaner for generations, from as early as the reign of Maharaja Rai Singh (1571–1612) down to the nineteenth century. The Umarani painters, among whom Ruknuddin was the most outstanding master, were largely responsible for the development of the classic late seventeenth-century Bikaner court style. Bikaner painting had progressed from a local idiom of the Popular Mughal style at the beginning of that century to the refined stylistic synthesis achieved under Maharaja Anup Singh (1669–98), above all in the work of Ruknuddin. This was in essence a successful Rajput adaptation of the refined Mughal style, with an intense, Deccani-influenced palette.[1]

Origins and Achievements of the Umarani Ustas

The Umaranis traced their descent from an individual named Umarji, whose father Bhuta Singh is thought to have been the first family member to convert to Islam. Their families still commonly speak Multani, and Multan has been claimed by most groups as their place of origin. Their earliest known forefather according to tradition was a Bhati Rajput (more probably of Kumhar or Mali caste), Sher Singh (see genealogical table 1), who perhaps came from Bhatner, Ludrwa, Pungal (Jaisalmer), or Multan; he is further discussed below.[2] After establishing themselves at Bikaner, these artists adopted the caste name Usta, deriving from their profession,[3] perhaps partly to conceal their inferior status as Muslim converts. Such professional names (e.g. Khajanchi: "treasurer") became common at Bikaner from the seventeenth century. Recently, much new information has been discovered in archival sources concerning the painters who worked in the royal studio, especially from the reign of Anup Singh onwards. The present article is largely based on this, and gives a brief account of the Umarani Ustas while throwing new light in particular on their genealogy and family relationships.

Though best known as painters working on paper,[4] the Umarani Ustas also painted on cloth or wood panels besides occasionally decorating festival statues such as those of Gangaur Mata, all generally with markedly finer brushwork than is found in other Rajasthani schools. Wall-paintings in the Phul Mahal near the Rai Singh ki Sal apartments in the Bikaner fort also include impressive works by Ruknuddin's studio and their later followers, such as a treatment of the theme of Lakshmi-Narayana (Vaikuntha-Darshana), or Vishnu and Lakshmi enthroned



1
Lakshmi-Narayana (Vaikuntha-Darshana): Vishnu and Lakshmi enthroned. By Ruknuddin. Bikaner, 1678. Opaque watercolour on paper; 19.3 x 25.8 cm. Present location unknown. Photograph: R. Skelton.

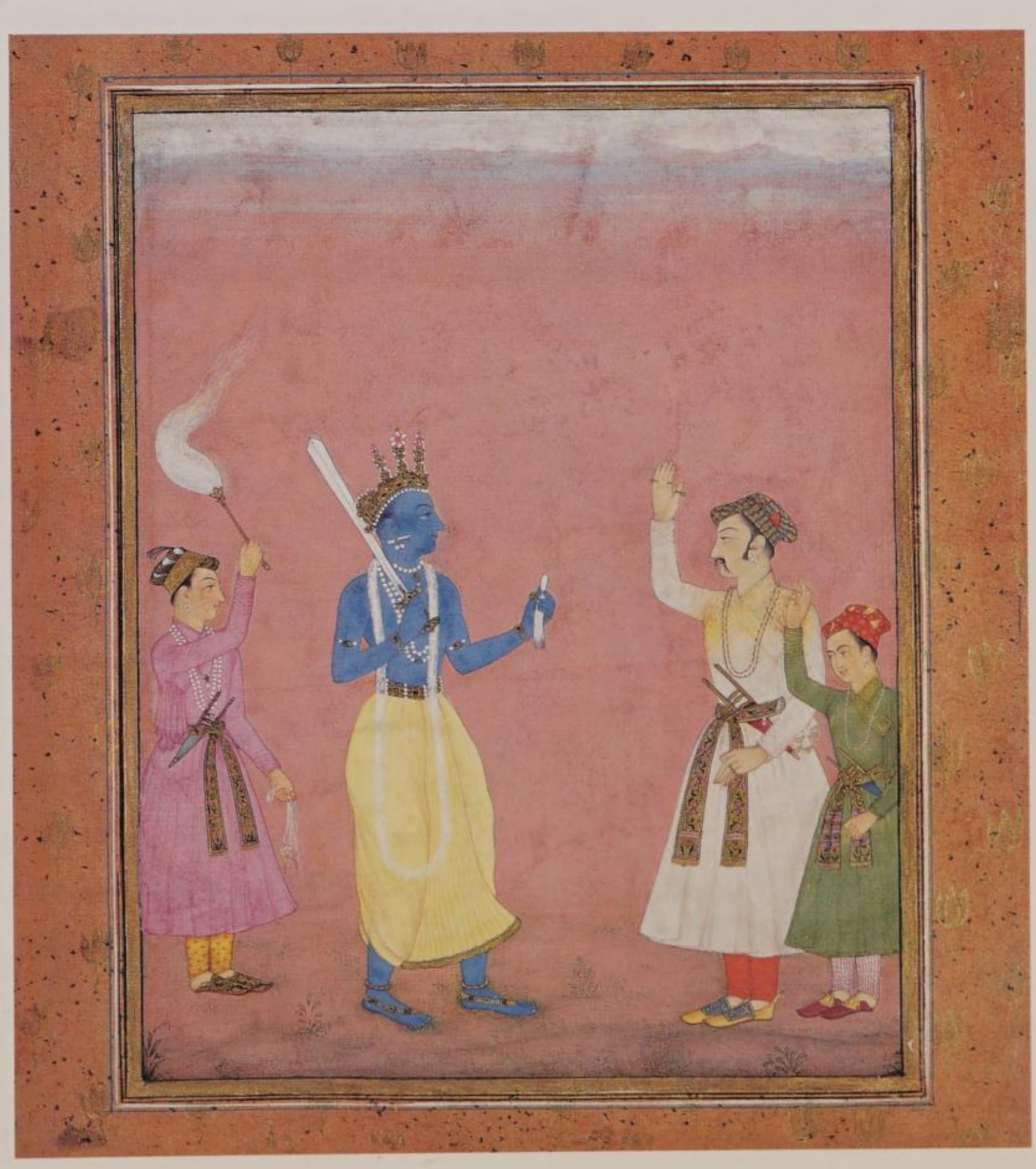
in the Vaikuntha heaven, found in a version on paper as well, dated 1678 (figure 1) and deriving from the master 'Ali Raza's original treatment of this subject of circa 1650.[5] Various *Krishnalila* mural scenes are also found, as well as some hunting scenes of the early eighteenth century in an adjacent octagonal room. A number of *bahi*s (archival records) too, mention the regular employment of Umarani artists in wall-painting commissions during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For example, Ahmad (R18)[6] son of Isa (R5), along with Ahmad son of Murad (who presumably belonged to another Usta clan), are known to have painted (repaired?) the Phul Mahal in the Junagarh fort at Bikaner.

The Umarani master Ruknuddin, as has been said, was chiefly responsible for the development of the late seventeenth-century Bikaner style, following to some extent the example set by Ustad 'Ali Raza, a Mughal artist who had established himself, with other immigrant painters, at Bikaner in the reign of Karan Singh (1631–69), where he painted his celebrated treatment of Lakshmi-Narayana.[7] At the same time, however, Ruknuddin adopted certain indigenous Rajasthani conventions in his work, including human figures with large, somewhat squarish heads on short-statured bodies.[8] Receiving favours from Ustad 'Ali Raza and from his royal patrons, the talented Ruknuddin became head of the royal *karkhana*

(workshop) until the end of the century. He was responsible for the overall planning of many remarkable series, including those of *ragamala* (figure 2), *Rasikapriya,* and scenes from the *Bhagavata Purana,* as well as commissions of darbar scenes and portraits of a more Mughal type. It appears that Ruknuddin naturally reserved for himself the best pages – usually the most prestigious in terms of theme or subject – among these sets and commissions, while delegating the remaining work among his subordinates according to their potential. His successors as head of studio similarly tended to monopolize the corresponding compositions in illustrated series commissioned in later periods. As a result, the sketches or tracings prepared by Ruknuddin became valuable heirloom gifts among his descendants. Ruknuddin's immediate successor, his eldest(?) son Ibrahim (R2), only partially inherited his father's artistic flair and technique, but still superseded his far superior uncles (from another branch of the Umarani clan) Natthu and Isa, and his cousin Nuruddin (son of Isa) in being appointed head of the royal studio in his turn.[9]

As well as making use of inherited sketches and tracings, the Umarani artists would have enjoyed privileged study access to the royal paintings store, which had been enriched with many works from other schools of Indian painting (as well as European prints), some received as royal gifts or dowry items and others acquired by Anup Singh from his spoils at Adoni in the Deccan in 1689. It appears that the group of Umarani painters who flourished up to the early period of Zorawar Singh's patronage (r. 1736–45), such as Gul Muhammad/Gullu/Gulab (R40), Mahmud (R11) and his son Hasan (R34) (one of the painters of the eighteenth-century *Bhagavata Purana* series), were able to draw useful inspiration from these models. Close contacts with Jodhpur in the second half of the eighteenth century brought further external elements into the Bikaner style, as observed in the works of Umarani artists such as Hasan (R52), son of Ahmad (R31), who followed his father in painting tall human figures of Jodhpur type, with fleshy round faces with broad curving eyes, against tall architectural backdrops. After this, the Bikaner style can be seen to have hardened again in the leaves of a further *Rasikapriya* of the late eighteenth century, executed in part by Muhammad (R40A?), son of Gul Muhammad (R40).

At this juncture, the Bikaner style was increasingly dominated by immigrant painters from the neighbouring state of Jaipur, working in a declining late Jaipur style as well as unsuccessfully imitating the shading and perspective of European models. Jivan (R38), son of Abu (R14), adopted some of these trends in his work. By the late nineteenth and early

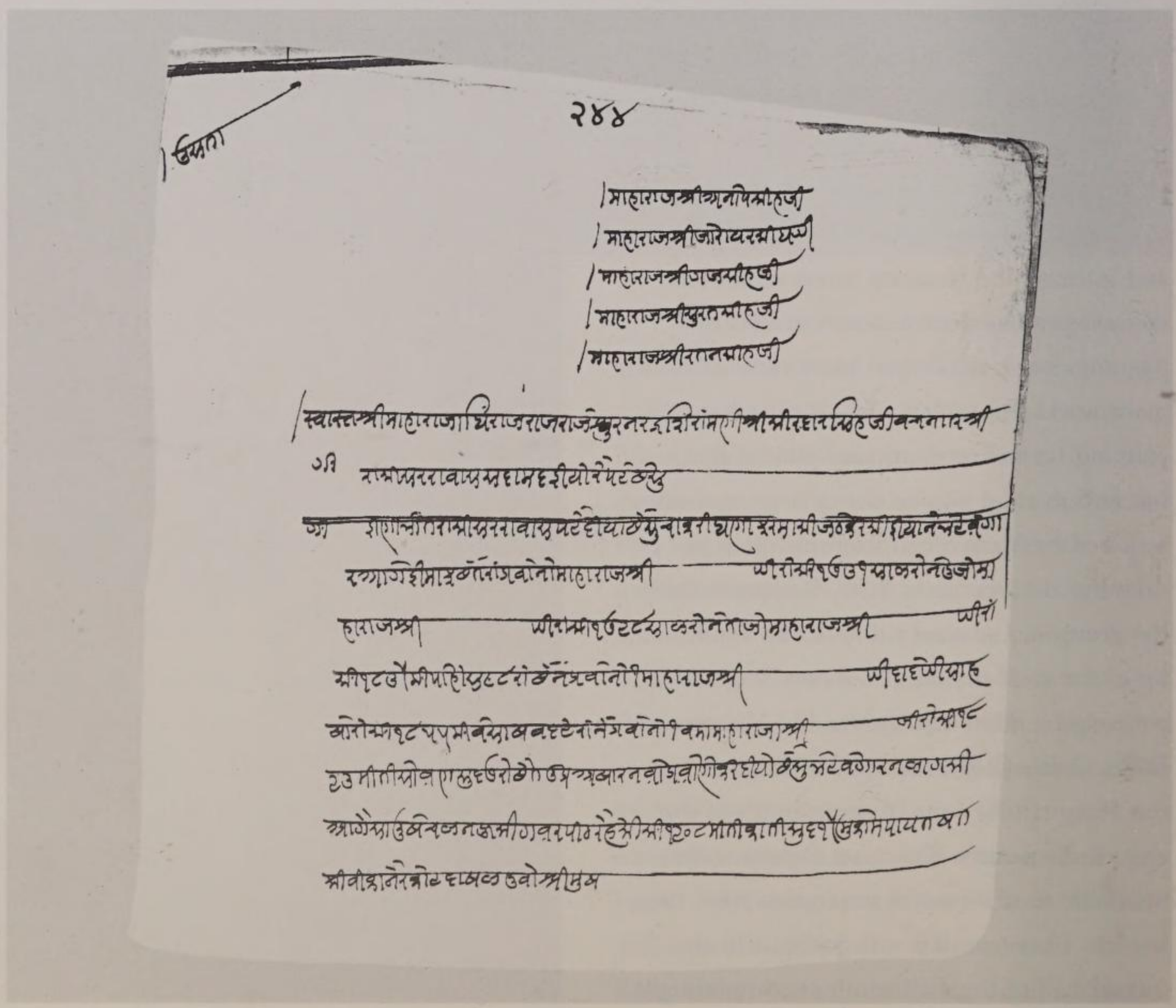


2
Kanada *ragini*, from a *ragamala* series. By Ruknuddin. Bikaner, circa 1680. Opaque watercolour on paper; 16.2 x 13.0 cm. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

twentieth centuries, most of the Bikaner artists, including the Umarani Ustas, had given up their profession or had moved to Jaipur, Jodhpur, and Kota, or eventually as far as central India, Pakistan, and even England, in search of employment of different kinds.

Social Status and Privileges

In their better days, which had begun when Ruknuddin gained such high esteem with his royal patrons, the Umarani painters had enjoyed a high social status and a comfortable standard of living, not far inferior to that of some Thakurs of the court. As a permanent source of income, several lucrative land grants and other favours were conferred on them. The *Sardaran Bahi* of VS 1800/1743 CE, a contemporary daily register of court land grants, is an important source of information (figure 3). In a passage relating to the land holdings of the Bikaner nobles, the *bahi* also includes the Umarani Ustas in that rank. It states that "...villages of Rasisar [close to Bikaner city] were given in such ways: in return for [the Ustas'] sincere work, their *bhent* ['presents'] and *begar* and *khechal* [miscellaneous taxes] are pardoned; as had been bestowed earlier [on their ancestors], that *parwana* [land grant] was released in VS 1731/1674 CE [i.e. during Anup Singh's reign]." As a reward for the Umaranis' continuing services, this periodic renewal of the land grant was maintained until the reign of Maharaja Sardar Singh (1851–52). Apart from their land holdings, the Umaranis received from the *mandi* (royal treasury) Rs 6 per month and (daily?) from the *modi khana* (provisions store) one seer (nearly 1 kg) of wheat flour and three measures of ghee. Their elephants and horses



3
Specimen extract from the *Sardaran Bahi* (court land grant register) of 1743, fol. 244. Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner.

also received upkeep and maintenance from the royal stable's *karkhana*. These generous provisions enabled the Umaranis to maintain a more comfortable and elevated standard of living than artists at most other Rajput courts. They were able to embellish their residence with a carved stone *jharokha* window as fine as those in the royal apartments. As a special privilege they were allowed not only to ride horses and elephants as a daily routine, but to ride all the way up to the courtyard adjoining the Maharaja's Darbar hall.[10]

The Genealogy of the Umarani Ustas

Largely unaffected by the presence of other visiting artists at Bikaner, the Umarani Ustas maintained a flourishing livelihood in this way for generations, leaving numerous unbroken chains of hereditary artists in their highly ramified family tree (see genealogical tables). So far a few modern scholars have made useful though fragmentary attempts to reconstruct outline genealogies of the Umarani and other Bikaner painters, on the basis of inscriptional information from court paintings available to them, but without being able to consult the written genealogies formerly found in various old Usta households.[11]

Here, adding to the foundation of my earlier research,[12] I am able to present a summary in chart form of all available genealogical data, deriving from inscriptions on accessible Bikaner paintings (especially *nazar* paintings, those gifted to the maharajas by individual artists), archival (*bahi*) sources, and other genealogical documents. It should be added, however, that some caution is needed in interpreting these findings. Confusion is easily caused by the many common names recurring among different groups of Usta painters, and, to complicate matters further, one generation of painters may sometimes have lived twice as long as another, adjacent branch, thus overlapping with their activities.

The Unbroken Chain of Usta Painters

As indicated in the genealogical tables, the progenitor of all branches of Usta painters was a certain Sher Singh Bhati (U1), who is thought to have flourished in the latter part of the sixteenth century or earlier. That he was a Bhati from western Rajasthan is revealed by at least two available archival documents. His son Bhuta Singh (U2), who became a Muslim convert, had four sons, perhaps contemporaries of the Popular Mughal-trained painters brought to Bikaner by Maharaja Rai Singh (1571–1612). They were Dayamji (U3), Hansi Muhammad (U5), Lal Muhammad (U6), founder of the Lalani *dhura* of Usta painters, and Umardinji or Umarji (U4), founder of the Umarani branch. They and their immediate offspring probably observed or participated in the earliest Bikaner *Bhagavata Purana* set, produced in a variant of the Popular Mughal style.[13]

Umarji had presumably been a Muslim since his father's time. He appears to have been the great-grandfather (or possibly great-great-grandfather) of Ruknuddin, from the evidence of archival genealogies. Ruknuddin himself in the latter part of his career worked alongside Ibrahim as well as his other sons, and most late seventeenth-century Bikaner paintings bear their names. Since the works of the other sons of Ruknuddin, for example Qayam (R4), Isa (R5: not the more famous Isa, father of Nure or Nuruddin), Abu (R6), and Shahabuddin (R7) are generally datable near the end of the century, or up to half a generation later than many of those painted by Ibrahim, we can perhaps surmise that Ibrahim was considerably older than his brothers (or else was allowed to work independently by his father at a precocious age). Such an age difference would explain why his brothers (albeit perhaps at a later stage of their career) are found working simultaneously with Ibrahim's son Qayam (R10) and two further unnamed sons (R8 and R9), or

GENEALOGICAL TABLES OF UMARANI USTA PAINTERS

TABLE 1
Late fifteenth to mid-seventeenth century

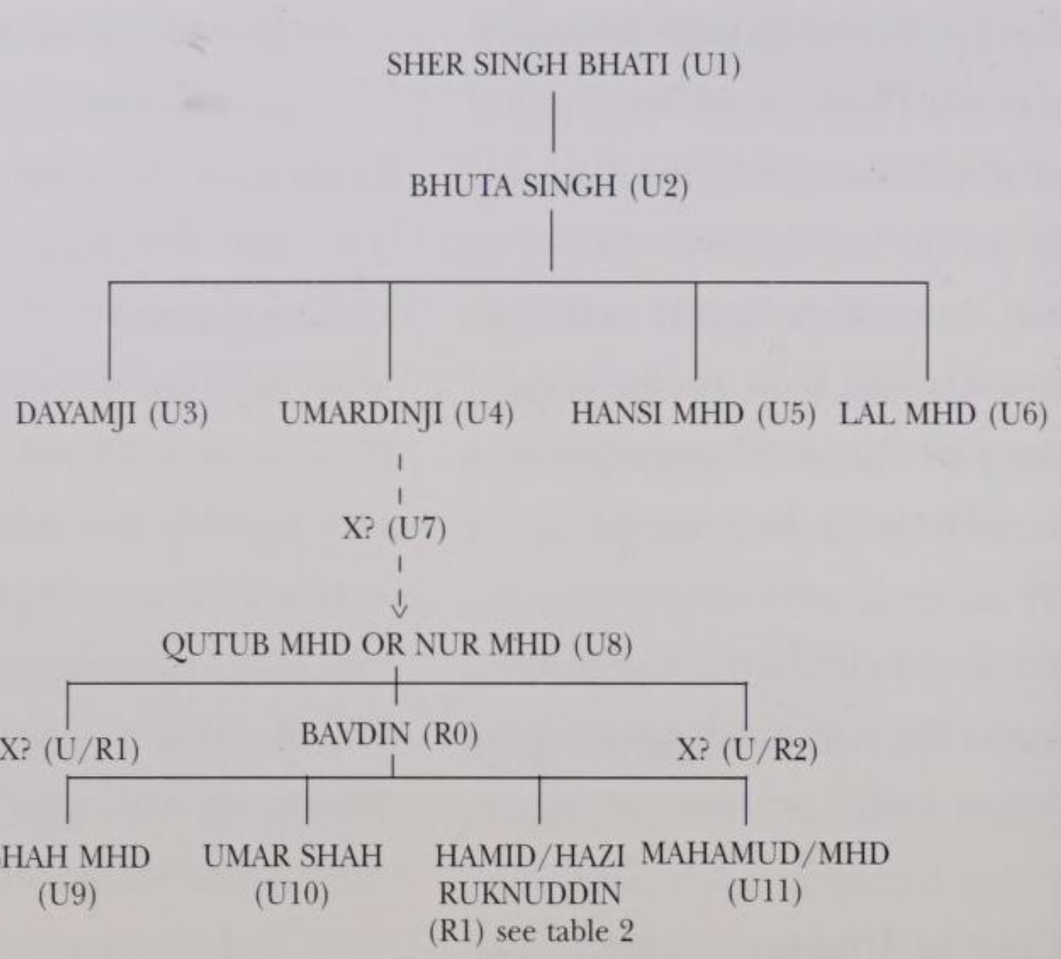
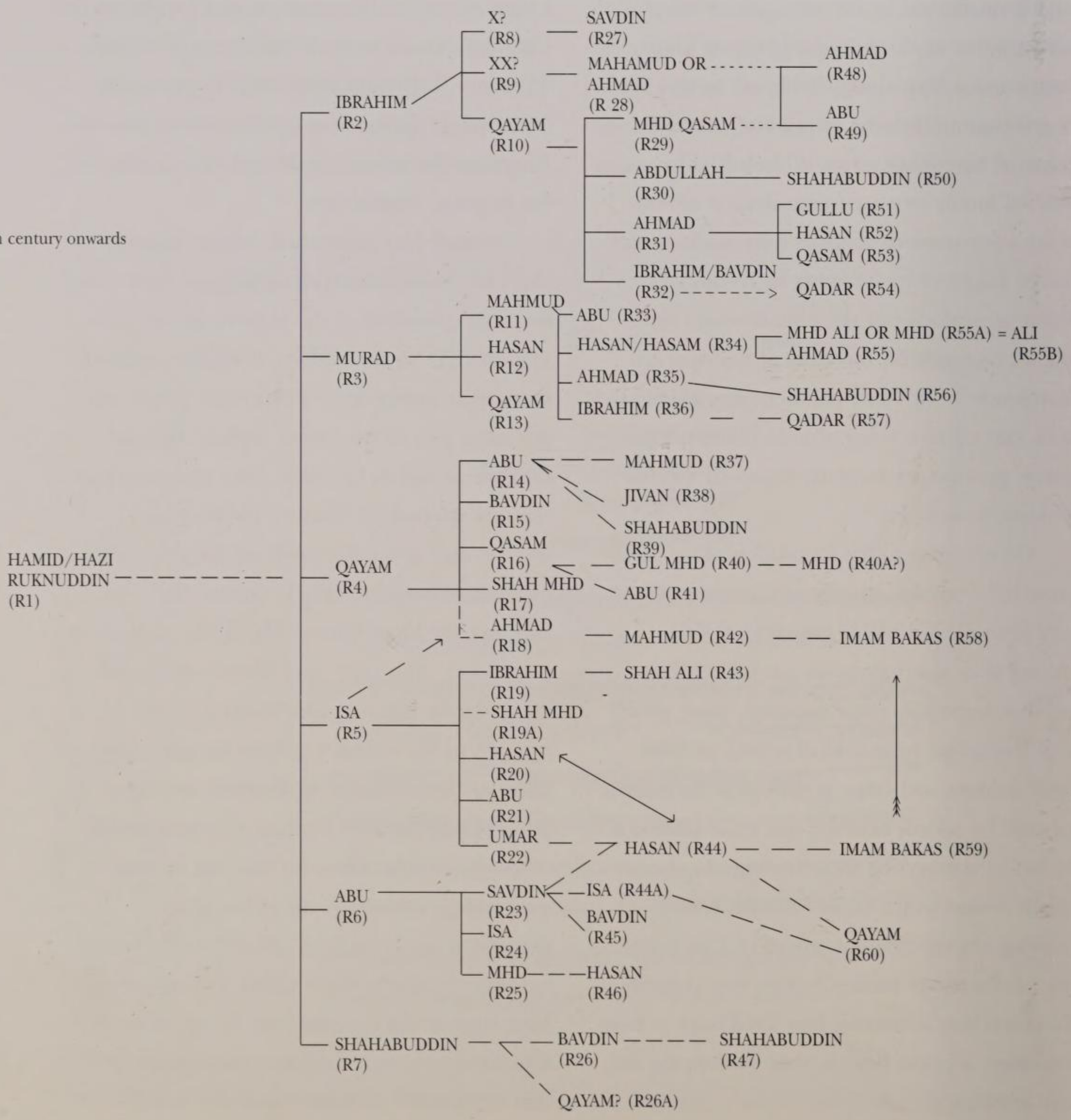


TABLE 2
Mid-seventeenth century onwards



even with their own sons. Similar generational overlaps are found in the eighteenth century, for example in the *Rasikapriya* series II and *Bhagavata Purana* series which were illustrated by Ibrahim's grandsons along with some of their uncles, the sons of Murad (R3), Qayam (R4), Isa (R5), and Abu (R6). To clarify these complex interrelationships further, it would be desirable to establish more exactly the dating and time span of each Umarani artist's working life, but this must await a future study.

Notes on the Genealogical Tables of Umarani Usta Painters

(1) The following references after artists' names are used:

(a) The prefix "U" within brackets denotes "Usta", i.e. the general class of artists flourishing up to Karan Singh's reign (1631–69). After this period, the prefix "R" (for Ruknuddin) denotes the earliest major Umarani painter and his successors. Mhd stands for Muhammad.

(b) Broken lines between names indicate tentatively the possibility of some family relationship between the two, as found in indirect sources.

(c) Broken arrows between names indicate the possibility of a direct family relationship with the name given at the tip of the arrow.

(d) Full arrows between names indicate that one artist was adopted by another from another family branch, the name of the latter being given at the tip of the arrow.

(e) An arrow tipped at both ends indicates a possible overlap of one generation, according to the sources.

(2) Caution must be observed in the following respects. When matching the names of Umarani artists with those in published sources or with the available short genealogies, there are some possible areas of confusion:

(a) Identical sequences or combinations of fathers', sons', and sometimes grandsons' names are found in different periods. For example, Ruknuddin (R1) had a son Qayam (R4) and grandson Qasam (R16); but also a grandson named Qayam (R10), who again had a son Qasam (R29). Or again: the sequence of Qadar (R54), son of Ibrahim (R32) and grandson of Qayam, (R10) appears in a similar form with the artists (R13) (an uncle in this case), (R36), and (R57).

(b) Individual names often reappear in several different generations, e.g. Abu (R6, 14, 21, 41, 49); Gullu (R40, 51); Qayam (R4, 10, 13, 60); Qasam (R16, 29, 53); Savdin or Shahabuddin (R7, 27, 39, 47, 56). One must also of course be wary of the same names found among the Lalani branch of Usta artists, who worked alongside the Umaranis.

(c) Possible ambiguity: e.g. the name *Muhammad Ali* (R55A) *Hasan ro* ["Muhammad 'Ali son of Hasan": R34] appears in one inscription; but this formulation could also be interpreted as meaning that an 'Ali (R55B) was the son of Muhammad (R55A).

(d) Some abbreviated forms of names as found in painting inscriptions and archival documents may be noted, e.g.: Abu for Abdullah; Bakas/Bakasu for Mola Bakhsh or Muhammad Bakhsh; Brahm/Biraham/Viram/Viham for Ibrahim; Gulu/Gullu for Gul Muhammad; Isa may indicate Ishaq; Qasam/Qasam Ali for Qasim; Qayam/Qayim Din for Qayam Din; Maimud/Mamud for Mahmud; Mamad/Maamad/Maimad for Muhammad; Sahabdi/Sabdi/Savdin/Savdi for Shahabuddin; Umar/Umarji for Umardin. It is of interest that almost always the more familiar (or pet) name of the artist is used, even in formal documents.

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NOTES

1. N. Krishna, "Bikaner", *The Dictionary of Art*, London, 1996, vol. XV, pp. 608-09.

2. H. Goetz, *The Art and Architecture of Bikaner State*, Oxford, 1950, p. 114, speculates that a group of painters came to Bikaner from Lahore – this is possible, but it seems likely that one group in fact came from Multan and another from Bhatner.

3. N. Krishna, "Painting and Painters in Bikaner", *Indian Painting: Essays in Honour of Karl J. Khandalavala*, ed. B.N. Goswamy and U. Bhatia, New Delhi, 1995, n. 34.

4. The *Sardaran Bahi* of VS 1800/1743 CE in the Rajasthan State Archives states that their job was *rang rangane sabi nikasi*, i.e. "to paint in colour and execute portraits": N. Krishna, "Bikaner artists and a Sardar Bahi of land grant", *Pathways to Literature, Art and Archaeology: Felicitation Volume in Honour of Pt. G.N. Bahura*, eds. C. Singh and N. Vashistha, Jaipur, 1991, pp. 155-61.

5. Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi: K. Khandalavala, M. Chandra, and P. Chandra, *Miniature Paintings from the Sri Motichand Khajanchi Collection*, New Delhi, 1960, no. 83, pl. E.

6. See Notes on the Genealogical Tables for the references used here.

7. I would tentatively propose that 'Ali Raza originally came from the Deccan (though movements of similar artists from Mughal *karkhana*s at Agra/ Allahabad to the Jaisalmer area cannot be fully excluded, as both Akbar and Jahangir were married to Jaisalmer princesses), travelling first to the Mughal court at Delhi (or Agra) and thence to Bikaner, finally to the Deccan with his Bikaneri patron. See N. Krishna, "Patasahi Ustad 'Ali Raza (fl. c. 1645–70) and his master creation at the Bikaner court", paper read at the National Seminar held at Bharat Kala Bhavan (November 1997), to be published in *Nidhi*, Varanasi, forthcoming.

8. According to a tradition of the Matherans, Bikaner folk painters belonging to a Jain caste group, this feature was their own contribution to the Ustas' style. However, this writer thinks it more probable that it arrived at Bikaner through the influence of Mewar painting.

9. N. Krishna, "Bikaneri miniature painting workshops of Ruknuddin, Ibrahim and Nathu", *Lalit Kala*, 21, 1985, pp. 23-27.

10. D.B. Kshirsagar and N. Krishna, *Court Etiquette of Marwar*, Jodhpur (forthcoming, 2000).

11. K. Khandalavala, M. Chandra, and P. Chandra, op. cit., pp.18-21; P.C. Bhargava, "Bikaner citra shaili ke Ustad Ruknuddin evam unke vamshaj", *Rupankan: Recent Studies in Indian Pictorial Heritage (R.G. Vijaywargiya Felicitation Volume)*, eds. V.S. Srivastava and M.L. Gupta, Jaipur, 1995, pp. 158-64.

12. N. Krishna, *Bikaner Court Painting*, unpublished PhD thesis, Varanasi, 1985.

13. First identified as such by Dr Anand Krishna; e.g. Goetz, op. cit., fig. 91. Now dispersed in various private collections.

BIJAPUR THEMES IN BIKANER PAINTING

Catherine Glynn

In the past, scholars of Indian painting have often speculated upon a relationship between Deccan painting and certain Bikaner paintings, yet thus far these observations have been only in general terms. Suggestions include an adoption from the Deccani palette of lighter, more pastel colours, and the use of oranges, mauves, and greens in a diffuse manner. This use of an expanded variation of colour replaces the intense, more restricted, primary colours and pure tonal quality usually associated with Rajasthani painting. It has also been pointed out that newly emerging in Bikaner painting was an interest in the decorative details of costume and background, elements used profusely in paintings from the Deccan.

These general observations are strengthened by a group of Bikaner paintings (figures 3, 4, 7, 8, and 9), covering a period of almost a century, where specific Deccani motifs, adapted from Bijapur paintings, are to be found. The earliest of these Bikaner works can be placed in the last quarter of the seventeenth century and the Deccani elements are still found a century later, in a Bikaner painting dated 1765. This visual evidence prompts exploration of the Bikaner relationship with the Deccan, and with Bijapur in particular.

One of the major preoccupations of the Mughal rulers during the seventeenth century was a continual attempt to subdue the vast central Indian plateau of the Deccan. The Bikaner rulers, closely related to the Mughals by marriage, were assigned and undertook important roles in the numerous Deccan campaigns.[1] From the reign of Raja Rai Singh (r. 1571–1612) through that of Sujan Singh (r. 1700–36), the Bikaner rulers were especially instrumental in leading the military assault for the Mughal emperors in their imperial quest to control the Deccan. Raja Rai Singh was the general-in-command for Emperor Akbar (r. 1556–1605) on the Deccan front from 1587 to 1592, was governor of the Deccan imperial capital of Burhanpur, and distinguished himself in the 1593 capture of Ahmedabad.[2]

During Emperor Jahangir's reign (1605–27), the Bikaner rajas Dalpat Singh (r. 1612–20) and Sur Singh (r. 1620–30) helped Prince Khurram (later Emperor Shah Jahan) in his numerous Deccan battles, including the 1630 devastation of Ahmednagar. As emperor, Shah Jahan (r. 1627–58) continued his involvement in the Deccan, and in 1631, granted the title of Rao and the fief of Bikaner to Sur Singh's son Karan Singh (r. 1631–69). He dispatched Karan Singh to the Deccan where he participated in the successful 1633 Daulatabad campaign along with Khan Dawran Bahadur. Karan Singh was again part of the imperial forces sent, under the command of Sayyid Khan Jahan Barha, to capture Bijapur in 1636.[3] Among his additional achievements in the Deccan were the conquest of the Jawar area

in the province of Aurangabad and his appointment as governor of Daulatabad.

The more exalted title of Raja, rather than Rao, was conferred upon Karan Singh's son, Anup Singh (r. 1669–98). In the 1670s Anup Singh was part of the great Mughal military expedition against Bijapur led by Emperor Aurangzeb, which resulted in the annexation of Bijapur to the Mughal empire. He achieved the position of commander of Aurangabad, the provincial capital of the Deccan, and was promoted for his services with the highest-ranking title, Maharaja.[4] So extraordinary were the administrative and military skills of Anup Singh that Aurangzeb appointed him governor of the fort of Nasratabad, as well as of the newly conquered Bijapur, in addition to elevating him from commander to governor of Aurangabad.

This sustained loyalty on the part of the seventeenth-century Bikaner rulers to their Mughal overlords necessitated absence from their domains for extended periods of time. It has been pointed out that during the never-ending Deccan wars, nobles posted to the Deccan rarely left it.[5] As a result of this intimate contact during a period of over a hundred years, the Rajputs absorbed many cultural influences from the Deccan, among which were elements from the well-established Deccani painting tradition.

In reference to painting in the Rajput kingdom of Kota, it has been observed that "Hindu Rajputs served as officers in the imperial armies of the Muslim Mughals, [spilling] much of their blood in the Deccan. There, at the imperial base camps, first at Burhanpur and later at Aurangabad, a remarkably catalytic cultural synthesis took place. [They] learned not only to appreciate one another's arts and traditions but also to admire those of the artistically inventive Deccanis..."[6] As noted earlier, it is generally accepted that Bikaner painting of the last half of the seventeenth century has many components adapted from Deccan paintings. Not long ago, one author stated "there are close stylistic links between Deccani painting and the Rajasthani school of Bikaner, but the nature of the relationship has never been fully explored".[7] More recently, it was stated that the "Deccani influence on Bikaner paintings can be observed in the orchid-like palette and the increased prominence of flamboyant decorative motifs.

1
A yogini with a mynah bird. Bijapur, early seventeenth century. Opaque watercolour on paper; 19.0 x 11.7 cm. Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, 11A.31.
Photograph: R. Skelton.

The qualities of Deccani and Bikaner painting are so thoroughly intermixed that it is sometimes difficult to ascribe a painting definitely to either school."[8]

The treatment of landscape achieves sublime and exuberant expression in Bijapur paintings from the early seventeenth century. In a page from the *Pem Nem* manuscript, made in the early seventeenth century for Ibrahim Adil Shah I of Bijapur (r. 1580–1626), the attention to oversized flowering shrubs, outcroppings of rocky protuberances set against a gold sky and flying waterfowl add a lush, somewhat surreal, decorative effect to this scene of musical appreciation.[9] There is little attempt at spatial recession; the three horizontal parts of the composition are stacked in a flat manner, one on top of the other. "A Yogini with a Mynah Bird" (figure 1) further extends these same elements. The massive flowering bushes now flank the single figure, while lesser, blooming shrubs occupy the area near her feet. The modest outcropping of rocks in the *Pem Nem* page is no longer subdued in this painting, but bursts wildly on the left side and forms a wrinkled profile on the right. This painter has included two quail sitting amidst rocks on the right, as accompaniment to the mynah held by the yogini, similar to the introduction of waterfowl as the avian factor in the *Pem Nem* page.

The theme of landscape is rarely treated in isolation by any Indian school of painting; "normally – indeed invariably – landscape appears either as a setting for divine or human events, or for human or animal portraiture, or as a metaphor for human feelings and activities".[10] Yet a slightly later Bijapur painting of circa 1650 (figure 2) differs from the other Bijapur works (figure 1 and note 9) in that it is devoted exclusively to a landscape theme, focusing on flowering plants, to the exclusion of figures. However, it too employs a three-part division of the composition and places the plants against a gold sky to create a brilliantly decorative image.[11]

As in these Deccani models (figures 1 and 2), it is precisely landscape and then, secondarily, the interest in avian activity that are the subjects of two later seventeenth-century Bikaner compositions: figure 3[12] (circa 1670–80) and figure 4[13] (circa 1690). In neither of the Bikaner paintings is the landscape a backdrop for human events, or portraiture; what we do find are rare examples of painting devoted to

2
Tall flowering plants in a landscape. Bijapur, circa 1650. Opaque watercolour on paper; 20.8 x 12.0 cm. Keir collection, London. Photograph: R. Skelton.

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landscape alone. Both of these Bikaner works, like the Bijapur examples already discussed, show a division of the vertical composition into three horizontal registers, the use of profuse landscape elements in the form of flowering bushes and trees, and the appearance of numerous waterfowl. In figure 3, the tree is also placed against a gold sky.

Soaring waterfowl occupy the upper horizontal registers of both Bikaner paintings, with the addition of a large, spiny mango tree in figure 3. Outcroppings of rocky protuberances, similar to those in two of the Bijapur paintings (figure 1 and note 9) appear at the right side of figure 3. Even the pair of quail in the outcropping of figure 3 can be traced to those in "Yogini with a Mynah Bird" (figure 1). The middle ground of the two Bikaner paintings displays the destructive, cruel laws of nature: a savage hawk swoops to the right after his successful attack on a crane, which plummets to the earth in the anguish of death. In the lower portion of both paintings tranquillity is restored with a bucolic landscape of ponds, lotus blossoms, flowering bushes, rocky outcroppings and, in figure 3, serene ducks. The natural law of survival in the avian world, exhibited in the aggressive action of the hawk, takes place amongst rocky hills, trees and bushes, flowing water and lotus pools.

3
Landscape with birds. Bikaner, circa 1670–80. Opaque watercolour on paper; 17.8 x 9.4 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Richard Ettinghausen, 1975.192.4.

A comparison of even more explicit elements found in these two pictures further indicates that Bijapur painting was the inspiration for the Rajput artists at Bikaner. The Bijapur artist of figure 5 (circa 1650) has composed an arrangement of birds within a landscape of flowering bushes that is replete with tension. Though the tufts of grass, hillocks, and flowering plants are meant to signify serenity, the agitation of the two pairs of birds is obvious and expressed through open beaks. The swooping hawk in the lower area of the Bikaner paintings (figures 3 and 4) is remarkably close to the pair of hawks in the upper area of this Bijapur painting, and a sizeable part of the floral elements in figure 4 has been derived from the floral types seen here.

Another, earlier Bijapur painting, circa 1610–20 (figure 6), though a fragment, provides a further precursor of the waterfowl which appear in figures 3 and 4.[14] The placement of the hawk and crane in the lower half of those Bikaner paintings is remarkably close to the

4
A hawk taking a crane in flight. Bikaner, circa 1680–1700. Opaque watercolour on paper; 40.5 x 30.0 cm with border, 21.4 x 12.6 cm without. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.

5
Two pairs of birds amidst a flowered landscape. Signed: Isma'il. Bijapur, circa 1650. Opaque watercolour on paper. Musée Guimet, Paris, 3619, M, a.

6
Fighting cranes. Bijapur, circa 1610–20. Opaque watercolour on paper; 12.5 x 18.3 cm. Musée Guimet, Paris, MG 9150.

position of the fowl in this Bijapur picture, though in reverse. Bijapur painting also inspired another Bikaner landscape of waterfowl amidst trees. Perhaps made for the Rajput patron Raja Anup Singh of Bikaner, it contains elements similar to many of those in figures 3 and 4.[15]

To sum up: all the Bijapur paintings discussed here have a three-part division of the vertical space. All use floral elements in an exuberant and profuse manner. The presence of waterfowl and the gold horizon are also part of the pattern of these Bijapur paintings. These same factors are to be found in the Bikaner paintings, figures 3 and 4. Clearly, since landscape per se was a rare pictorial subject for the Rajput painter, and by no means part of his usual repertoire, the stimulus for such a departure from his normal subject matter must have been exposure to Bijapur painting.[16]

Three royal equestrian portraits of the eighteenth century (figures 7–9) show the continued use of the same distinguishing elements of the Bijapur themes that were seen in the two seventeenth-century Bikaner works (figures 3 and 4).[17] In figure 7 (circa 1715–20), the heavy chain-mail armour, steel helmet, lance and shield worn by the twenty-five to thirty-year-old Raja Sujan Singh (r. 1700–36) and the full metal blanket covering his horse, allude to his position as the last of the Bikaner rulers to return from Mughal service in the Deccan.[18] The backdrop for this regal statement, occupying the horizontal upper third of the picture, is an arid landscape, faithfully incorporating the composition seen in the upper third of figure 3. The placements of the mango tree, the pool of water to the left, the waterfowl and the birds have been precisely copied from the earlier painting. In another, earlier painting of a twenty-year-old Sujan Singh (dated 1710), the waterfowl that were part of figures 3 and 4 have been again incorporated, although in a modified manner.[19]

Zorawar Singh, Sujan Singh's son, had a brief nine-year reign (1736–45). Yet, based on the quality of figure 8 (circa 1736–40), the high level of Bikaner royal painting manifested in

7
Equestrian portrait of Raja Sujan Singh (r. 1700–36). By Ustad Qasim, Bikaner, circa 1715–20. Opaque watercolour on paper; 22.2 x 14.0 cm. Whereabouts unknown.

8
Equestrian portrait of Raja Zorawar Singh (r. 1736–45). Attributed to Ustad Murad, Bikaner, circa 1736–40. Opaque watercolour on paper; 24.8 x 17.5 cm. National Museum, New Delhi, BKN 35.

9
Equestrian portrait of Kumar Raj Singh. By Qasim, Bikaner, dated 1765. Opaque watercolour on paper. Private collection.

earlier paintings (figures 3, 4, and 7) persisted, though here treated with the flair of baroque embellishment. In this equestrian painting of Zorawar Singh, closely patterned in composition after the preceding painting of his father (figure 7), the Raja is accompanied by a retinue of nobles, attendants, and hunters. The arid landscape background that framed Sujan Singh, the blossoming mango tree, the pool of water at the left edge of the composition, the rocky outcroppings on the right side, and water-birds flying in the golden horizon are visible in the upper third of this painting.[20] The image of the crane plummeting to earth after being attacked by the hawk, one of the themes in figures 3 and 4, appears here in the middle third of the picture, close to the equestrian figures.

The equestrian noble in figure 9 can be identified as Prince (Kumar) Raj Singh of Bikaner, based on his resemblance to an inscribed portrait.[21] Raj Singh was the son of Gaj Singh, the Bikaner Raja who succeeded his cousin, Zorawar Singh. Like figures 7 and 8 (and see also note 19), Goetz inspected this painting in 1947 while he was at the Bikaner Palace.[22] From his observation we learn that it is dated 1765 and was painted by Qasim, perhaps the same artist named Qasim who painted figure 7. It is interesting to note that Raja Gaj Singh, Raj Singh's father, has been included in the painting, riding in the howdah placed atop the elaborately caparisoned elephant in the far right distance. Raj Singh was named Raja in 1787, but he never really ruled, dying within days after his succession.[23]

Although the composition of figure 9 has used a wider and deeper space for the picture plane than that seen in figure 7 or 8, the vegetation, particularly the blossoming mango tree, the pond to the left, the quail placed on the rocks, and the waterfowl, with the crane and hawk, have all been appropriated from the earlier Bikaner paintings (figures 3, 4, 7, and 8). The arid, golden toned palette pervading figure 3 has also been consistently maintained in each of the three royal equestrian paintings (figures 7, 8, and 9), suggesting a specific topographical location. Goetz writes that the area around the lake of Gajner (about 30 kilometres southwest of Bikaner) is similar to these pictorial settings and it may have been this native locale that was adopted as the background for these paintings, which reach back one hundred years to a Deccan inspiration.[24] Gajner in history and still today, is famous for its avian activity. At Gajner in 1904 Sir Philip Egerton himself shot no less than 305 sand-grouse in three hours. It is now a wildlife

sanctuary and "abounds in various types of ducks, sand-grouse, the imperial sand-grouse, chinkaras, black bucks, wild boar, hare, fox, blue bull, spotted deer and sambar". The state contained a variety of bird life including "partridge, florican, great Indian bustard, lesser bustard, wild duck and teal [and] several species of sand-grouse".[25]

While no one can doubt that these three equestrian portraits are examples of Rajput painting, it is interesting to note the various intertwined strands of their make-up. The backgrounds, as we have shown, are derived from the Deccan. The source of the equestrian subject matter, however, comes from the Mughals (although certainly not originating with them). There are numerous examples of Mughal paintings of the seventeenth century glorifying the emperors in equestrian roles.[26] By adopting this mode of representation the Bikaner rulers, like other Rajput chiefs, were attempting to emulate their imperial Mughal counterparts. Certainly the presence of the halo in figures 7 and 8 links the Bikaner rulers to the Mughal concepts of kingship, royal privilege, and power. The Bikaner rajas' early attempt to forge an identity with the imperial rulers by adopting this equestrian portrait genre became part and parcel of the stock painting formula after the seventeenth century, illustrating the persistence of tradition in iconography as in court protocol, throughout Rajasthan.

A second connection between the Bikaner rulers and the Mughals conveyed by figures 3, 4, 7, 8, and 9 is the regal sport of hawking, of which the Mughals were especially fond. Abu'l Fazl devotes five pages to various aspects of the sport in his commentary on court activities in the period of Akbar.[27] One section singles out the pursuit of waterfowl: "hunting waterfowl affords much amusement". Emperor Jahangir also mentions his pursuit of hunting with hawks in early 1610.[28] The subsequent interest of the Rajput rulers in hawking was yet one more instance of imitating the Mughals. It is not surprising therefore to find in the Bikaner paintings (figures 3, 4, 8, and 9) a hawk fulfilling its role in bringing down its prey, the crane. Add the Rajput elements and sensibility to the Deccani and Mughal concepts, and we can see the complexity of much Rajput painting. As to the Bijapur themes, an alien import adopted to convey a landscape composition during a hundred-year period, no longer are they Bijapur themes. They are now Bikaner themes, fully integrated into the Bikaner repertoire.

NOTES

1. The Bikaner rajas, like the Kachhwahas of Amber, married their daughters to Mughal princes. See Catherine Glynn, "Evidence of Royal Painting for the Amber Court", *Artibus Asiae,* 56, 1996; Catherine Glynn and Ellen Smart, "A Mughal Icon Re-examined", *Artibus Asiae*, 57, 1997. Raja Rai Singh of Bikaner and the Mughal Emperor Akbar were brothers-in-law, each married to sister princesses of the house of Jaisalmer (James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan,* vol. II, London, 1957, p. 143). One of Prince Salim's (Emperor Jahangir's) wives was a Bikaner princess, the daughter of Rai Singh, thus making Rai Singh the future emperor's father-in-law (Herman Goetz, *Art and Architecture of Bikaner State,* Oxford, 1950, p. 41). Prince Parviz (1589–1626) was the result of this union between Jahangir and Rai Singh's daughter.
2. Goetz, op. cit., pp. 40-47; Tod, op. cit., pp. 143-46.
3. See Milo C. Beach and Ebba Koch, *King of the World: The Padshahnama,* Washington DC, 1997, nos. 35, 36, and 40, for paintings of Khan Dawran Bahadur and Sayyid Khan Jahan Barha in the Deccan campaign. Also Stuart Cary Welch, et al., *The Emperor's Album: Images of Mughal India,* New York, 1987, no. 66 for a portrait of Khan Jahan Barha and a good description of Shah Jahan's Deccan campaigns. For a full description of Karan Singh see Samsam al-Daula Shah-Nawaz Khan, *Maathir-ul-Umara,* translated by Henry Beveridge and Bani Prasad, vol. I, Patna, 1979, pp. 764-66.

4. Muhammad Qasim Ferishta, *History of the Rise of the Mahomedan Power in India,* translated and edited by J. Briggs, vol. II, Calcutta, 1971, pp. 40-43. For a portrait of Anup Singh see Andrew Topsfield, *Paintings from Rajasthan in the National Gallery of Victoria,* Melbourne, 1980, p. 38, no. 13. See also Goetz, op. cit., p. 46, and Tod, op. cit., II, p. 146, for further information on Anup Singh; also Karni Singh, *The Relations of the House of Bikaner with the Central Powers,* New Delhi, 1974, pp. 86-93.

5. John F. Richards, *The Mughal Empire,* Cambridge, 1993, p. 242; Goetz, op. cit., p. 47, where he comments that the "rajas had spent much more time at the imperial court or with the imperial armies" [than in Bikaner].

6. Stuart Cary Welch, et al., *Gods, Kings and Tigers: The Art of Kotah,* New York, 1997, p. 18.

7. Mark Zebrowski, *Deccani Painting,* London, 1983, p. 215. Fifty years ago Herman Goetz, op. cit., p. 131, wrote that Rajput art was "enriched by many new influences coming from the disintegrating sultanates of the Deccan".

8. Steven Kossak, *Indian Court Painting: 16th–19th Century,* New York, 1997, p. 17.

9. Reproduced in Zebrowski, op. cit., p. 104, no. 81.

10. Robert Skelton, "Landscape in Indian Painting", in *Landscape Style in Asia: Colloquies on Art and Archaeology in Asia,* no. 9, ed. William Watson, London, 1980, p. 156.

11. For a discussion of this painting see Robert Skelton in Basil W. Robinson, et al., *Islamic Painting and the Arts of the Book,* London, 1976, p. 270, V. 99.

12. Reproduced in Sotheby & Co., *Highly Important Oriental Manuscripts and Miniatures: the Property of the Kevorkian Foundation,* December 6, 1967, lot 164.

13. Reproduced in Topsfield, op. cit., p. 37, no. 10. This work was once in the Mewar royal collections as it carries inventory number 23/29 on the reverse. For information on the meaning of these Mewar inventory numbers, see Andrew Topsfield, "The Royal Paintings inventory at Udaipur", in *Indian Art and Connoisseurship: Essays in Honour of Douglas Barrett,* ed. John Guy, Ahmedabad, 1995, pp. 188-99.

14. Zebrowski, op. cit., p. 85, no. 61. In fact, this painting may have been in the Bikaner collection. Though it does not have the usual Bikaner collection stamp, it is mounted on a beige/orange border, a border that is found on numerous paintings, both those done by Bikaner artists and those of non-Bikaner origin, once in the Bikaner royal collection.

15. Zebrowski, op. cit., p. 218, no. 188. For similar adoption of the waterfowl subject matter by Kota painters in the Chhattar Mahal (circa 1680–1710), see Stuart Cary Welch, et al., op. cit., 1997, p. 27, fig. 17.

16. Zebrowski, op. cit., p. 217 comments that "a large number of superb Deccani paintings in the Bikaner Collection bear inscriptions stating that they were acquired either by Rai Singh, when he was Mughal governor at Burhanpur (1607–11), or by Anup Singh while governor of Adoni (1689–98). The presence of Deccani paintings, and perhaps Deccani artists, at Bikaner influenced the local style, but it is also possible that Rajasthani painters accompanied their patrons to the Deccan where they popularized Bikaner conventions." For a Deccani painting of circa 1690, largely devoted to landscape, that was inventoried in the Bikaner Palace collection in 1694 (VS 1751) see Zebrowski, op. cit., p. 207, no. 180. It is this kind of painting which must have been the catalyst for figure 3. Welch, et al., op. cit., 1997, p. 18, notes that "toward the end of the seventeenth century, with the defeats of Bijapur and Golconda seemingly imminent, [Deccani artists and craftsmen] flocked to Aurangabad, the Mughal military outpost.... If a Mughal or Rajput, enriched by his share of the imperial spoils, needed a poet, theologian, philosopher... or artist, he could choose from an eager array of talent trained at Bijapur or Golconda."

17. Perhaps an equestrian painting of Raja Sur Singh (r. 1620–30) and his son, Karan Singh (r. 1631–74), now lost, may also fit into this group. As described in Naval Krishna, "Painting and Painters in Bikaner: Notes on an Inventory Register of the 17th Century", in *Indian Painting: Essays in Honour of Karl J. Khandalavala,* eds. B.N. Goswamy and U. Bhatia, New Delhi, 1995, p. 278, fn. 19 (iii), it is similar to our figure 8.

18. Goetz, op. cit., p. 51. This painting is reproduced in Sotheby's, *Indian and Southeast Asian Art,* New York, September 19, 1996, lot 169. It may be the painting referred to in Goetz, op. cit., p. 113,

and dated 1716. For a self-portrait of Ustad Qasim, the painter of figure 7, see Vishakha Desai, *Life at Court: Art for India's Rulers: 16th–19th Centuries*, Boston, 1985, p. 38, no. 33.

19. Reproduced in Naveen Patnaik, *A Second Paradise: Indian Courtly Life 1590–1947*, New York, 1985, p. 92, no. 28, and also in Milo C. Beach, *The New Cambridge History of India: Mughal and Rajput Painting*, Cambridge, 1992, p. 191, no. 143, and Stuart Cary Welch, *Rajasthani Miniatures: The Welch Collection from the Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University*, New York, 1997, p. 28 (1995.123). Goetz, op. cit., p. 113 identifies this work as a gift from Anup Singh's painter Ustad Murad to Sujan Singh and suggests that the setting may be a place near Aurangabad.

20. Published in W.G. Archer, *Indian Miniatures*, Greenwich, Ct, 1960, pl. 54; Jamila Brijbhushan, *The World of Indian Miniatures*, Tokyo, 1979, pl. 25; Stuart Cary Welch, *India: Art and Culture 1300–1900*, New York, 1985, p. 369, no. 247.

21. This unidentified equestrian painting is reproduced in B.N. Goswamy, *Essence of Indian Art*, San Francisco, 1986, p. 182, no. 140. The inscribed portrait of Kumar Raj Singh was identified by this author in 1976 and is reproduced in Pratapaditya Pal, *Court Paintings of India 16th–19th Centuries*, New York, 1983, p. 256, pl. R41.

22. Goetz, op. cit., p. 115.

23. Ibid., p. 117. Tod, op. cit., p. 146 says that Raj Singh was poisoned by the mother of his half-brother Surat Singh, who was next in the line of succession.

24. Goetz, op. cit., p. 115. Gajner had its own palace, garden, artificial lake, and shooting lodge. For a late eighteenth-century Bikaner painting including the hunting lodge, see A. Topsfield, "Painting for the Rajput Courts", in B. Gray, ed., *The Arts of India*, Oxford, 1981, fig. 178.

25. I am grateful to Andrew Topsfield for the following references: K.D. Erskine, *Rajputana Gazetteers, III-A: Western Rajputana States and Bikaner*, Allahabad, 1909, p. 312; K.K. Sehgal, *Rajasthan District Gazetteers: Bikaner*, Jaipur, 1972, p. 12.

26. For example: Stuart Cary Welch, et al., 1987, no. 59, p. 203; Linda York Leach, *Mughal and Other Indian Paintings from the Chester Beatty Library*, vol. I, London, 1995, pp. 272, 275, 351, 384, 428.

27. Abu'l Fazl, *Ain-i Akbari*, translated by H. Blochmann, Delhi, 1965, pp. 304-08.

28. Alexander Rogers and Henry Beveridge, translators, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, Delhi, 1968, vol. 1, p. 164.

SATIRE AND HUMOUR IN KISHANGARH PAINTING

Navina Najat Haidar

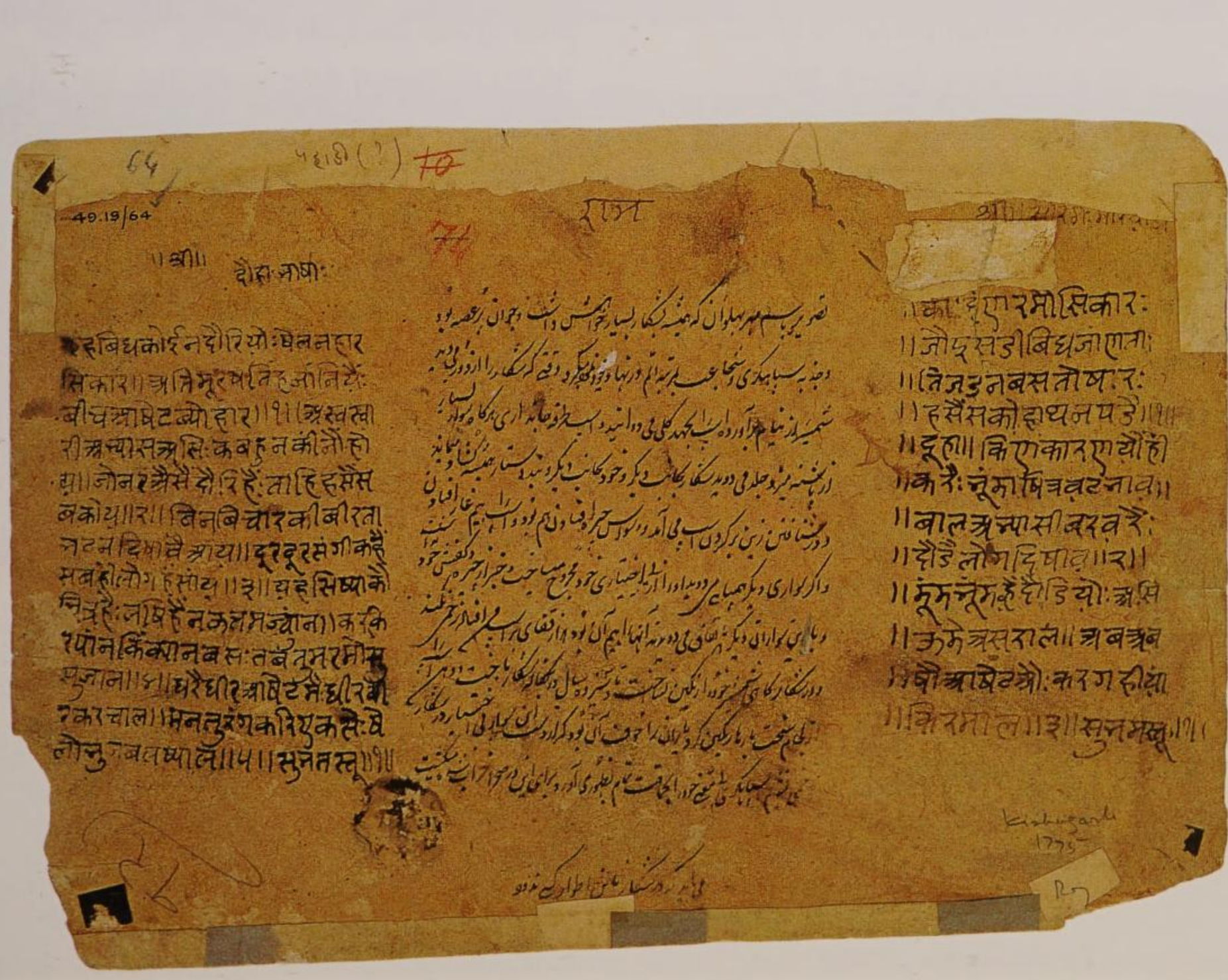
An outlandish content and striking stylizations often characterize the genre of humorous and satirical paintings from Kishangarh, which stand out from those found in other Rajasthani schools in their unique concentration. The interpretation of such enigmatic images and their patronage at the Kishangarh court is the subject of this article. Hasya Rasa, the playful comic sentiment found in most periods of Indian art, pervades such works.[1] But at Kishangarh, drawing on the mixed traditions of eighteenth-century Mughal culture, these comic exercises reached new and peculiar heights. Satirical and humorous paintings first appear under the reign of Maharaja Raj Singh (1706–48) and continue until the third quarter of the eighteenth century. The genre therefore flourished during much the same time as the famous, more elevated style of Radha-Krishna *bhakti* painting.

From the available evidence it appears that the humorous mode in Kishangarh painting, as elsewhere, was often used didactically, to convey a moral point or instruction. However the paucity of dated and inscribed material relating to the genre has made it difficult to interpret images. It is likely that many humorous subjects at Kishangarh are related to local, and in many cases lost, traditions of literature and folklore. A previously unpublished work in the National Museum, New Delhi, although late in date, is therefore important as it is accompanied by detailed and informative inscriptions on the reverse. This is a depiction of a (possibly proverbial) hunter Mihr Pahlavan, executed in circa 1765–75 (figure 1).[2] This vibrant and amusing painting portrays the hunter in wild disarray, riding a horse whose stylized awkwardness serves to add to the overall impression of chaos. Wearing a white *jama* flying out behind him, Mihr Pahlavan carries a sword in one hand and holds the reins of his horse with the other. His quiver, one slipper (revealing a bare toe), dagger, and powder-flask (?) are all in mid-air, having fallen off his person. A river runs across the background, with two boats, each holding a few men and, strangely, a horse. A hunting scene appears on the far bank of the river. Mihr Pahlavan's horse has a bleeding mouth, in accordance with the description given in the Persian inscription, and a white hunting dog follows behind.

The meaning of this bizarre image is revealed in the Persian and Brajbhasha inscriptions which describe the buffoonish rider's hunting expedition in Bengal (figure 1a). Apart from making fun of him, a certain didactic element conveying a moral instruction may also be discerned in the words. A paraphrase of the Persian inscription is:

> Painting of Mihr Pahlavan who was very fond of hunting and was a young temperamental man and he revealed an attraction for great

1
Mihr Pahlavan hunting. Kishangarh, circa 1765–75. Opaque watercolour on paper. National Museum, New Delhi, acc. no. 49.19/64. Photograph courtesy National Museum, New Delhi.



1a
Inscriptions on the reverse of figure 1. Photograph courtesy National Museum, New Delhi.

bravery and soldiering to the highest possible degree. When he spotted his prey from afar he would draw out his sword from its scabbard and cause his horse to rush forward with great effort. Whenever he was mounted on a good, frisky steed he would kick it [urge it on]. The prey would run in one direction and the horse and rider in the opposite. The ribbon of the hunter's turban would come undone and his saddle would slip on to the horse's neck; he was worried about his turban falling off and also that the horse would fall into a hole. If another hunter chose to keep pace with Mihr Pahlavan, he would be injured by him. Mihr Pahlavan didn't know where his turban or shoes were [he was very chaotic]. Other riders with him were afraid lest he fall off his horse and injure himself. Mihr Pahlavan was never successful at colouring his sword [with blood] until he was thirteen years old and went hunting in Bengal. He pulled the horse's bit hard several times so that its mouth began to bleed. The other hunters were afraid that through the actions of Mihr Pahlavan they might be injured in the hunt. He revealed his ineptitude as a soldier in its utmost stupidity. For this reason he is travelling in a desolate place. There never was such a hunter as he.

A paraphrase of the Brajbhasha inscription is:

> No-one should ride horseback in this manner, everyone would laugh at one who does so. Unthinkingly he comes and tries to show off his valour to warriors, bragging a lot [?] and making people laugh. This is a picture meant for instruction, by looking at it [?] one will get excellent knowledge. Only when you have your sword in your hand's control... [?]... should you besport yourself, O wise one. Keep courage in the hunt, with a pace like a valiant hero; making your mind/ heart and your horse one [i.e. have your horse follow your intentions?], play on the strength of your arm.

The inscriptions reveal various layers of facetious intention in the painting. Pure humour is expressed in the Persian description of Mihr Pahlavan running in the opposite direction from his prey, while a harsher satire is apparent in his only success at drawing blood (by pulling the horse's reins too hard). The Brajbhasha is more sermonizing, stating a moral point against conceited bragging. The metre *(doha)* mentioned there implies that this was a recited poem. Stylistically, the work is distinguished by a marked angularity in the treatment of the principal figures. The fluid, more naturalistic treatment of figures, and curvaceous stylization of earlier Kishangarh compositions (e.g. figure 2) has given way here to a considerably stiffer line, although one that retains a lively potency. This advanced stylization suggests that it was painted in the third quarter of the eighteenth century.

As mentioned above, the earlier and highly creative period under Raj Singh saw the first examples of humorous and satirical painting at Kishangarh. There is evidence that the principal artist in the Raj Singh atelier, Bhavanidas, played a contributing role in this genre. "A formidable lady", probably executed around 1735, reveals the Mughal-trained hand of Bhavanidas in the fine brushwork and skilled

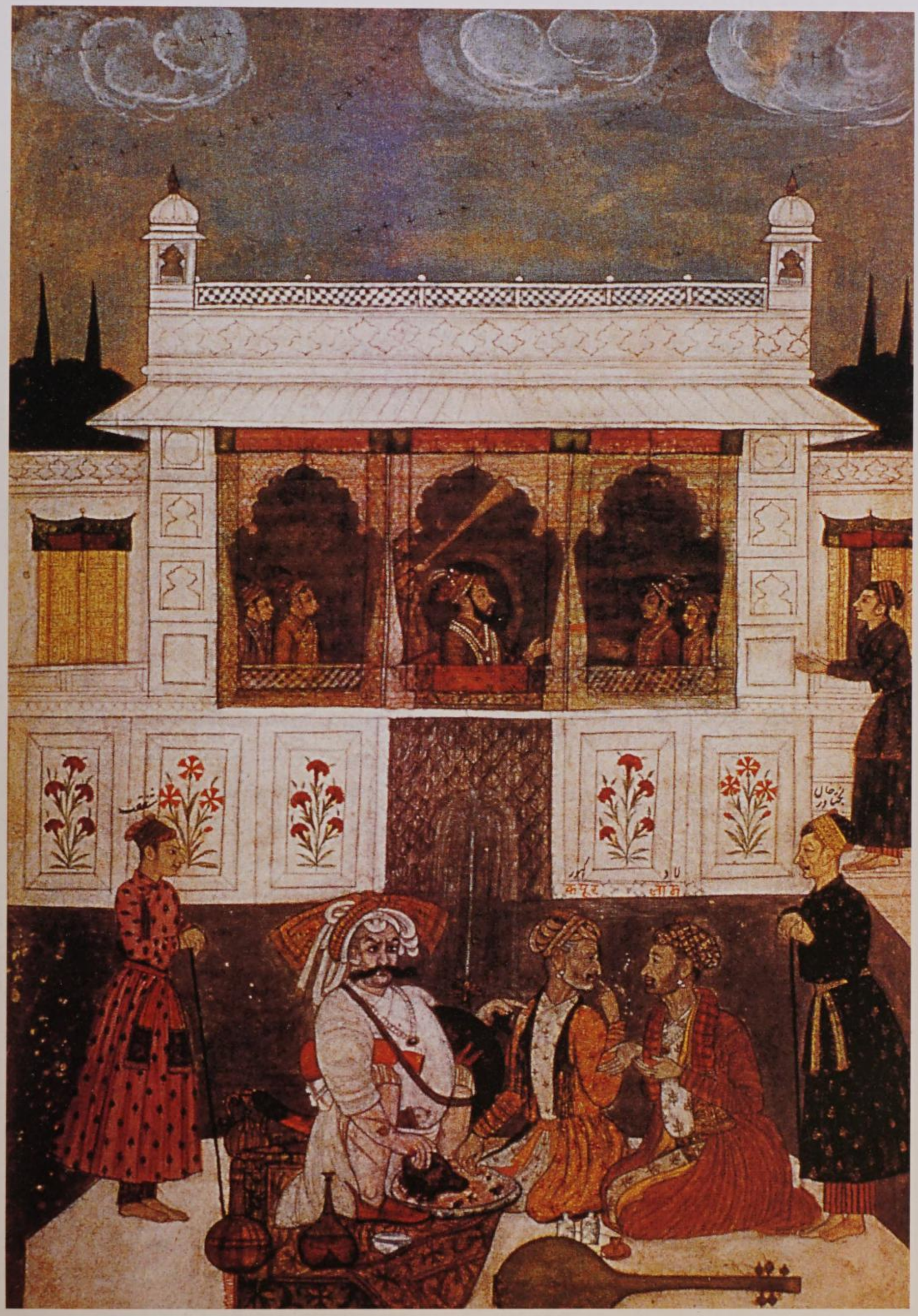
2
A formidable lady. Attributed to Bhavanidas. Kishangarh, circa 1735. Watercolour on paper. Private collection, Kishangarh.

3
Bad feelings in the bazaar. Attributed to Bhavanidas. Kishangarh, circa 1735. Opaque watercolour on paper; 13.2 x 23.2 cm. Harvard University Art Museums, Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Cambridge, acc. no. 501.1983, private collection.

modelling of the figures (figure 2).[3] This picture is quite clearly ridiculing the unfortunate subject. Four men recoil from her in horror, or double up in laughter, but in all cases maintain a safe distance from the gargantuan figure of the elderly woman advancing upon them. The quality of draughtsmanship in this work is of a high standard, indicating the artist's expressive command of human psychology. The figure of the old woman is draped in a diaphanous white dress, covered by a white *orhni,* through which the rolls of fat around her waist can be seen. Her double chin, thick neck, and large feet add to the whole effect. The figures of the four men are proportionally much smaller than that of the woman, further emphasizing her size. Corpulence in satirical literature often reveals decadence and corruption, and it is a notable point that obese characters often feature as subjects in satirical Kishangarh painting.[4]

Another important humorous work, which has been plausibly attributed to Bhavanidas by both Falk and Welch, has been given the apt title "Bad feelings in the bazaar" by its present owner (figure 3).[5] At the centre an obese spice-seller holds a pair of scales and appears panic-stricken at the sight of the strange officers arriving from the camp in the background.[6] The first officer sports a prominent moustache, wears a pointed turban (of a kind often seen in such satirical works), and most strikingly, bends over backwards staring at the sky. On the left-hand side of the composition, fleeing from the scene are the figures of a fruit-seller and what appears, from his shaven head and short tuft, to be a dwarflike pandit. The extraordinary caricature effects are immediately striking. Although there is no inscription accompanying the work and the full meaning of the painting is obscure, a certain amount can be deduced from the powerful burlesques. The obesity of the spice-seller and pandit implies that they have both enjoyed the good life, unlike the slender fruit-seller, whose wares may not have attracted the same custom. The officers from whom they are all fleeing seem to be portrayed as arrogant and frightening, yet ridiculous at the same time. The appearance of an arching eyebrow over a prominent eye is particularly associated with the second half of Raj Singh's reign, indicating an approximate date of 1735 for this work. Since its initial publication, a further comparable picture has come to light which may offer some explanation. This depiction of a similar (or the same) officer, in a private collection, is evidently by the same artist or a close follower in circa 1740 (figure 4). The subject assumes the same exaggerated, backward-leaning posture, wears a pointed red turban and carries a sword and shield. He is followed by a bounding black and white dog and he holds a bird overhead. Details of his clothing and inscriptions in Persian and Hindi offer some clues as to his identity.[7] Both the Persian and the Hindi mention a name ending in Quli, thus a Muslim name. This identification is supported by the *jama* which is

4
An officer, bird, and dog. Kishangarh, circa 1740. Opaque watercolour on paper. Private collection, London.



5
A greedy Afghan servant. Kishangarh, circa 1740. Opaque watercolour and gold on paper; 31.1 x 22.2 cm. Private collection, London.

tied in the Muslim style under the right arm. Could this therefore be in part a Rajput joke at the expense of their Mughal overlords?

The illustration of the peculiar story of a greedy Afghan servant, previously in the Ehrenfeld collection, contains a lengthy Persian inscription on the reverse (figure 5).[8] This painting depicts a Mughal emperor and his four sons at a *jharoka* balcony, watching a scene in the courtyard below. A huge Afghan with a bristling moustache sits belligerently before a plate of food in front of two men who are identified by Devanagari inscriptions above their heads as Kapur and Lad. Attendants flanking the group are named in nearby Persian inscriptions as Shafqat (on the left) and Bakhtawar Khan (on the right). Another figure on the right, identified as Nazar, makes a gesture of supplication towards the king. On the reverse, a short Devanagari verse identifies the emperor as Shah Jahan and is followed by the story in Persian. Some of the obscurities in the Persian inscription may arise from it having been copied from an earlier source:

Verse:

When [Shah Jahan Ghazi] is seen,
Kings tremble in fear
This is how he has his enjoyment

One day it was told to His Majesty that there was an Afghan servant in the house of Kapur and Lad who dominates his masters. If there is one person in the world whom Kapur and Lad fear, it is this Afghan. His Majesty asked Kapur and Lad to present themselves. His Majesty and the four princes appeared around the curtain. It was ordered that Kapur and Lad be seated on the bare floor and that word be sent to their servant that his master requires a carpet. Two robes of honour were given to Kapur and Lad, along with a pearl necklace and a bag of one thousand rupees. His Majesty ordered that a plate of food with a head of lamb be brought in front of Kapur and Lad, so that he could see how their Afghan servant would react. The Afghan was told to fan away the flies. When the mentioned Afghan arrived, he spread out the carpet for himself and sat down. When he saw the food which was pleasant to his nature and the food of his country, he pulled it in front of himself and started eating. He grabbed the bag of gold and pulled the pearl necklace off Kapur's neck and put it on his own. He seized the golden belt from [Lad's?] neck and wrapped it around himself. He did not allow Lad to eat with him. The Afghan said "If the pearl necklace is due to you, this food is due to me. I will not give you any." The hungry musician [?] who had not eaten for a while tried to take a bite. The Afghan refused and said "Why should I let you eat? Tell Lad that until you give me the necklace and the belt, either here or at home, I am not giving you anything to eat." The Afghan was not supposed to take anything from them, but under the excuse of his just due he wanted to do so. If they wanted to dismiss him from his servantship, that would not be possible because he would say that the brothers had no honour and nobody would accept him as a servant anymore. It is a famous proverb: "The servant of Kapur

and Lad rubbed his lips and would take his due."

The story as revealed in the inscription is clearly humorous though also somewhat lacking in internal cohesion and clarity. Its main thrust is mockery of the Afghan's greed and insubordination, the weakness of his masters, and the reversal of roles in their relationship. The proverb mentioned at the end echoes the theme of just dues which suffuses the story at various points. The painting closely corroborates the inscription, as is shown by the Afghan servant with the golden sash wrapped around his head, the head of lamb in his hand, and the corresponding gestures of surprise expressed by his masters.

Kapur and Lad can be more fully identified with the aid of a drawing illustrating the same two characters in the Cincinnati Museum. This Kishangarh drawing, erroneously catalogued as Mughal, is executed on the reverse of a seventeenth-century sketch of a Mughal prince (figure 6).[9] The portraits of Kapur Khan and Lad Khan are inscribed with their names above their heads in Persian and Hindi, adding the title Khan to each name and also stating that the two are brothers. In addition, the caption *kalavant* at the top of the page informs us that they are musicians, a fact supported by the inclusion of musical instruments in the foreground of "A greedy Afghan" (and also mentioned in its inscription).[10] Bakhtawar Khan (d. 1686) is described in contemporary biographical sources as a eunuch in the service of Aurangzeb who was the author of a history and was a powerful member of the court.[11] His presence in a Shah Jahan darbar scene is somewhat anomalous. The figure of Shafqat is not identifiable but may be a page boy. The person described as Nazar or Nazur is not identified here by name but by his position, this being a term used to refer to eunuchs in the employ of the court.[12] It is notable that the image of an Afghan eating this favoured delicacy (a head of lamb) occurs in a Jodhpur picture portraying a similar theme.[13]

"By the light of the moon and fireworks", a riotous scene of debauchery on a terrace, is a tour de force of humorous painting at Kishangarh (figure 7).[14] A corpulent, elderly, drunken Mughal nobleman is surrounded by a bevy of licentious women, many of whom are also intoxicated, and some among them indulging in the "friendly vices of the zenana".[15] Among this sometimes startling array of figures, certain individuals stand out: a dark-skinned eunuch, an ill-tempered hag, a group of fighting women who gesticulate violently, and others engaged in erotic pursuits (figure 7a). Beyond the marble terrace upon which the scene is set, fireworks shine and a crescent moon glimmers. The Hindi and Persian inscriptions on the reverse of the painting describe the scene in a censorious and high-minded way: "a gathering of the

6
Portrait of Kapur Khan and Lad Khan; the sketch on the left is of an unindentified courtier. Kishangarh, second quarter of the eighteenth century. Opaque watercolour on paper; 16.2 x 15.3 cm. Cincinnati Art Museum, Gift of John J. Emery, acc. no. 1950.292.

7
By the light of the moon and fireworks. Attributed to Bhavanidas. Kishangarh, circa 1740. Opaque watercolour and gold on paper; 21.8 x 15.6 cm. Harvard University Art Museums, Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Cambridge, private collection.

uninformed, wine-drinking, restless ones".[16] They suggest that the intended satire is on the carnal over-indulgence in some Mughal zenanas – as opposed to the more decorous scenes of harem life usually found in Mughal painting.[17] The subject matter of this picture makes it unique; no other work depicting such exuberant and explicit intemperance is known from Kishangarh. The highly skilled quality of the painting, particularly the delicate detailing, use of gold, shading and colouring, show this to be the work of a superior artist. This technical finesse along with the imaginative characterization of the figures suggests that the artist was again Bhavanidas, who must have executed it in circa 1740. This painting reveals curious insights into the psychology of the artist and his patron, both of whom must have shared a complex, subtle, and sardonically humorous perception of the world.

"Strange happenings on a terrace" is an intriguing tinted drawing of two women on their hands and knees, each holding one end of a fish in her mouth (figure 8).[18] The figures are on a terrace, set against a curving horizon with an assortment of small vessels and musical instruments before them, suggesting that this may have been an illustration to an anecdote or proverb that is no longer current. This drawing ranks among the more bizarre productions at Kishangarh in its savage representation of the females, whose eagerness to grasp the fish is apparent in the artist's rendering of their bared teeth. Although the artist is not known, this work was probably produced in the period circa 1740–45.

As is found in other genres of Kishangarh painting, there exist contemporary and perhaps earlier examples in Mughal painting for the humorous treatment of particular subjects. It has also been recently suggested that similar traditions existed in Deccani painting, particularly at Aurangabad, to which Kishangarh

7a
Detail of figure 7.

painters may be indebted.[19] An early eighteenth-century Mughal composition, "Altercations at a hermitage", is without doubt related to the satirical tradition at Kishangarh (figure 9).[20] Here, outside a hermitage, a huge man, reminiscent of the spice seller in "Bad feelings in the bazaar" (figure 3), is being soundly thrashed by a thin man, a quarter of his size and strength. The ironic element of a very fat man being beaten by a very thin one is in the same spirit as comparable Kishangarh works. Subjects of caricature were also known at other

8
Strange happenings on a terrace. Kishangarh, circa 1740–45. Black line with gold and colour washes on paper; 12.6 x 19.9 cm. Harvard University Art Museums, Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Cambridge, acc. no. 28.1983, private collection.

9
Altercations at a hermitage. Mughal, circa 1735–40. Opaque watercolour on paper. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, acc. no. 07.693.

Rajput courts. In one example from Bikaner, a portrait of Rawal Sri Lakhan Singhji portrays him as a bridegroom wearing the wedding *sehra,* head ornament (figure 10).[21] His enormous figure, swarthy complexion, and advanced age, together with the flies that hover above his pendulous lower lip, make this an uncompromisingly satirical image.[22] The artist is mentioned in the inscription on the reverse as Ustad Ahmad, son of Pir Baksh, and the work appears to be dated to 1733, making it contemporary with similar developments at Kishangarh.[23]

Who, we may finally ask, could have been the chief patron and possibly the instigator of humorous and satirical works at Kishangarh? Surprisingly, the evidence suggests that Maharaja Raj Singh's third son Prince Savant Singh (until now mainly known as a devotional poet and a religious-minded patron of *bhakti* painting) may have been particularly inclined to this humorous genre. This is indicated at least by a comic and individualistic drawing by Prince Savant Singh himself (figure 11). "Turkish horse and rider" is executed in black outline on paper. The subject and the artist are mentioned in the Hindi inscription that runs along the top of the page: *tasvir ghora turki ki maharaj kumar sri savant singh ji ki banai dast khas,* "Painting of a Turkish horse by the special hand of Prince Savant Singh".

The taut, slender and goblin-like figure of the rider wears the narrow pointed turban of a kind that occurs in humorous works from Kishangarh (figures 3 and 4). His wispy beard, long nose, and slender, curving body are rendered with a sensitive and confident hand, giving the figure a quizzical character. In contrast, the body of the horse is notable for the somewhat heavier treatment of the large flanks, the thickset head, and rearing stance. This work establishes without doubt Savant Singh's ability in the art of drawing, and throws light on the close collaboration he must have had with court artists.

10
Rawal Sri Lakhan Singhji as a bridegroom. By Ustad Ahmad. Bikaner; dated 1733(?). Opaque watercolour on paper; 16.5 x 13.5 cm. Private collection.

Several other examples of painting by Savant Singh are known and from the surviving evidence it appears that he preferred to produce outline drawings, rather than coloured pictures.[24] We are told that he executed several tinted drawings of horses, which presumably remain in the Darbar collection.[25] From a published example of his handwriting on a drawing the script on this work can also be identified as his autograph.[26] Although he remains best known for his involvement in devotional poetry and painting, this drawing reveals a more informal and secular aspect of

11
Turkish horse and rider. By Prince Savant Singh. Kishangarh, circa 1735–40. Black line on paper. Private collection, Udaipur.

Savant Singh's interests and suggests that he may have been one of the main patrons of the more eccentric works created at Kishangarh. Within the close quarters of the Kishangarh atelier this patronage must have been carried out in harmony with the artistic projects of Raj Singh and his chief artist Bhavanidas.[27]

NOTES

1. B.N. Goswamy, *Essence of Indian Art*, San Francisco, 1986, pp. 95-122.
2. Thanks are due to Dr Daljeet of the National Museum, New Delhi, for allowing access to the reserve collection.
3. The tiny inscriptions beside each figure are too small to be read from the available slide, but are likely to name the characters depicted.
4. L. Siegel, *Laughing Matters: Comic Tradition in India*, Chicago, 1987, pp. 22-24 for a discussion on obesity in Sanskrit literature.
5. Published in S.C. Welch, *A Flower from Every Meadow*, New York, 1973, no. 28; S.C. Welch, "A matter of empathy: Comical Indian pictures", *Asian Art and Culture*, 3, Fall 1994, p. 97, figure 16; T. Falk, "The Kishangarh artist Bhavani Das", *Artibus Asiae*, LII, 1/2, 1992; also discussed by Kumar Sangram Singh in the exhibition catalogue: *Catalogue of Indian Miniature Paintings*, Rajasthan University Library, Jaipur, 1965, no. 7, where the scene is described as an altercation over the prices of goods.
6. Cf. O.P. Sharma, *Indian Miniature Painting*, Brussels, 1974, no. 64, pl. 64, for a comparable image of an obese vegetable seller, of the late eighteenth century.
7. The title Kanwar (?) Quli is mentioned in a faint Persian inscription on the painting. A further Hindi inscription on the border (which has not been reproduced here) reads: *ganjdum (?) quli.*
8. Published in D. Ehnbom, *Indian Miniatures: The Ehrenfeld Collection*, New York, 1985, p. 152, pl. 70, also reproduced is the inscription on the reverse on p. 255; Sotheby's, 22.4.1980, lot 89.
9. Published in E.S. Smart and D. Walker, *Pride of the Princes*, Cincinnati, 1985, cat. 11.
10. D. Neumann, *The Life of Music in North India*, New Delhi, 1980, p. 86. The nineteenth-century writer Muhammad Karam Imam classifies *kalavants* as those musicians who know *dhrupad* and *trivat* as well

as the old and new *ragas*, specializing in vocal music. Many are from Muslim families (this may explain the addition of the title "Khan" to the Hindu names of Kapur and Lad, thus Islamicizing them).

11. Saqi Must'ad Khan, *Maāsir-i-Ālamgīrī,* tr. J. Sarkar, Calcutta, 1947, pp. 142, 155. Bakhtawar Khan is described as an "intimate courtier" who was the *darūghā* of the Khwasas, jewellery department and goldware, and the author of the *Mir'āt al-'Ālam*; H. Beveridge, (tr.), Awwab Samsam-ud-Daula Nawaz Khan, *Maāthir ul-Umarā,* 3 vols., New Delhi, 1979, vol. I, p. 674, mentions that Bakhtawar Khan died in the 28th year of Aurangzeb's reign as the superintendent of the pages.

12. N. Manucci, *Storia do Mogor,* tr. W. Irvine, London, 4 vols., 1907–08, vol. II, p. 351. Manucci lists a number of eunuchs and mentions that they were all given the title of *nāzir* or guardian or superintendent. A further painting of a *kirtan* scene in the Darbar collection at Kishangarh makes a similar identification of several figures.

13. B.N. Goswamy, op. cit., p. 206, cat. 162.

14. Published in S.C. Welch, *India: Art and Culture, 1300–1900,* New York, 1985, no. 250; Welch, "A matter of empathy", p. 101, fig. 19; N. Patnaik, *A Second Paradise: Indian Courtly Life,* New York, 1985, p. 102, no. 34.

15. Welch, *India,* p. 372.

16. Hindi: *majlas bekhabar: besabar,* "Gathering of the uninformed [and] the impatient"; Persian: *majlis-i bikhabaran minaushan bisabaran,* "Gathering of the uninformed, wine-drinking, restless ones".

17. Siegel, op. cit., p. 274: in Sanskrit literature the subject of women's drunkenness is sometimes considered an enhancement of the erotic sentiment (*sringara rasa*), elements of which may also be reflected in this painting.

18. Published in S.C. Welch, *Indian Drawings and Painted Sketches,* New York, 1976, no. 66; Welch, "A Matter of Empathy", p. 98, fig. 17.

19. Ibid., "A Matter of Empathy", pp. 92-103.

20. Published in A.K. Coomaraswamy, *Catalogue of the Indian Paintings in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts,* Cambridge, 1926, VI, p. 59, pl. CXVIII.

21. S. Lee, *Rajput Painting,* New York, 1960, p. 49, illustrates this painting, describing it as "Trilokh Khatri as a bridegroom"; the subject is also briefly discussed in J. Mittal, "Caricature and comic in ancient Indian art", *Roopa Lekha,* XXXIII, 1962, pp. 60-69, and again identified as "Trilokha Khattri"; also seen at Spink and Son, London, 1992.

22. Harvard University Art Museums, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Cambridge, private collection, acc. no. 479.1983 is another version of this subject, which is cut down and damaged. A further nineteenth-century version remains in a private collection in New York.

23. Hindi: *raval sri lakhan singh ji ri sabi s(?) 1790(?) kalam ustad ahmad pir baks re bete ri.* "Portrait of Shri Lakhan Singhji VS 1790(?) by Ustad Ahmad, son of Pir Baksh."

24. E. Dickinson and K. Khandalavala, *Kishangarh Painting,* New Delhi, 1959, p. 19, fig. 5.

25. F.A. Khan, "The Painters of Kishangarh", *Roopa Lekha,* LI, 1980, p. 64.

26. Dickinson and Khandalavala, op. cit., p. 19, fig. 5.

27. I am grateful to the Barakat Trust, University of Oxford, for its support during the research for this article. I am also indebted to Dr J. Gurney of the Oriental Institute, University of Oxford, Dr R. Snell of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, and Professor M. Khorrami of New York University for their assistance with some of the inscriptions.

THE THAKURS OF GHANERAO AS PATRONS OF PAINTING

Rosemary Crill

Painting in the small *thikana*s (fiefdoms) of Rajasthan often presents problems of attribution resulting from a dearth of information about patronage in courts away from the main centres. Some of these minor courts, however, have produced a surprisingly rich corpus of works, often done for just one or two rulers – the paintings by the artist Chand for Raj Singh of Junia come to mind, for example, and works from other smaller centres such as Sitamau, Uniara, and Isarda also suggest a thriving, if sporadic, tradition of patronage in the lesser courts.

Ghanerao, situated close to Marwar's border with Mewar, is a *thikana* with a remarkably strong and continuous tradition of patronage of painting. A considerable number of paintings done for the Ghanerao Thakurs either by local court artists or by visiting artists from Jodhpur survive, and many of these were at one time in the collection of the late Kumar Sangram Singh of Nawalgarh, who was related by marriage to the Ghanerao ruling family.[1] Although these are now largely dispersed into other collections, it is fortunate that several of these paintings bear inscriptions identifying the ruler, the place where it was painted, the date and, sometimes, the artist's name. This unusually full documentation has enabled us to chart the development of painting for the Ghanerao Thakurs from circa 1715 to the mid-nineteenth century, and in some cases to identify which of the Jodhpur court artists were engaged in commissions for them.

Ghanerao's location meant that it was frequently a bone of contention between the two larger states of Mewar and Marwar (Jodhpur), but the Ghanerao rulers belonged to the Rathor clan and were descended from Rao Jodha (r. 1453–89), the founder of Jodhpur, so their loyalties were to the Jodhpur ruling house. The Ghanerao Thakurs belonged to the Mertia sub-clan, whose name derives from the town of Merta, east of Jodhpur, which was founded by Rao Jodha's son Duda, from whom the Mertias trace their descent. Ghanerao first came under Mertia rule in 1552, under Thakur Pratap Singh (r. 1552–68), but the first Thakur of whom a portrait survives is his descendant Pratap Singh II (r. 1714–20) (figure 1). This painting had a later inscription added to the lower field (now removed) which wrongly identified the sitter as Krishna Das, a later Ghanerao noble, with a date equivalent to 1771, but this is incompatible with the style of the work. The earlier inscription in the upper left-hand corner was revealed during recent conservation, and identifies the sitter as *maharaja partap singji ghanerao* and *maharaj sri pratap si[n]gji*. This remarkably elegant painting is typical of the refined style of the early eighteenth century in Jodhpur itself, and was probably painted by one of the court artists of Maharaja Ajit Singh (r. 1708–24) rather than a local Ghanerao artist. A

1
Thakur Pratap Singh of Ghanerao (r. 1714–20) with nobles. Ghanerao, circa 1715–20. Opaque watercolour on paper; 37.5 x 28.0 cm. Harvard University Art Museums, no. 1995.120.

number of paintings in comparable style testify to the high quality of painting in Jodhpur at this time, including several equestrian portraits, notably a fine one of Sonag Singh Champawat of Pali,[2] portraits of a noble seated in a garden,[3] and a standing portrait of Ajit Singh.[4] The extreme refinement of some (by no means all) of the paintings done for Ajit Singh is evidently the result of the involvement at the Jodhpur court of Mughal-trained artists, and provides a link between the well-known late seventeenth-century drawings and paintings done under Maharaja Jaswant Singh I[5] and those of the 1720s by the Delhi artist Dalchand for Maharaja Abhai Singh (r. 1724–49).[6] The composition of the ruler seated on the floor between two rows of nobles was already well established by the time the Jaswant Singh drawings were done (circa 1660s), and continued to be one of the most enduring forms of portraiture in

2
Thakur Pratap Singh of Ghanerao with ladies. Mewar, circa 1715–20. Opaque watercolour on paper; 30.5 x 23.0 cm. Formerly Mewar royal collection; British Rail Pension Fund; present whereabouts unknown. Photograph: R. Skelton.

the Rajput kingdoms (see for example figure 3).

The proximity of Ghanerao to Mewar accounts for another painting of Pratap Singh done in a very different style which is identifiably Mewari (figure 2). While the Thakur himself is portrayed very much as a Rathor, with distinctive turban, profile, and side-whiskers, the ladies who accompany him are drawn in the Mewar style. Pratap Singh may also be the subject of another painting possibly done in Ghanerao which shows a noble worshipping at a Devi shrine. The inscription gives his name simply as Pratap Singh, but his facial features and style of turban suggest that he could be the Ghanerao ruler of that name. The painting is dated VS 1790/1733 CE.[7]

Padam Singh (r. 1720–42)

Several portraits are known of Pratap Singh's successor, Thakur Padam Singh. The finest is a darbar scene in the Prince of Wales Museum, Mumbai (figure 3).[8] It shows Padam Singh, lavishly dressed and bejewelled, seated on a patterned carpet amongst a group of nobles and children, with officials, scribes, and a bard (*charan*) who stands behind him holding a *morchhal* (peacock-feather fan). The painting is extensively inscribed on the reverse with the names of the sitters, and also bears an inscription identifying the artist as Chhajju, a resident of Jodhpur (*chitaro chhajju vas jodhpur*), and giving the date as VS 1782/ 1725 CE. No paintings of the rulers of Jodhpur

3
Darbar of Thakur Padam Singh of Ghanerao (r. 1720–42). By Chhajju of Jodhpur. Ghanerao, dated 1725. Opaque watercolour on paper; 27.2 x 33.2 cm. Prince of Wales Museum of Western India Mumbai, no. 54.32.

by Chhajju have so far come to light, which suggests that, though he may well have received training at that court, he was employed by the Thakur of Ghanerao and pursued his career there, if only briefly. The quality of the painting and draughtsmanship of this work is remarkable, and shows none of the crudeness associated with much *thikana* work. The details of textile patterns and jewellery are very well observed, and the portraits of the sitters are accomplished. While the composition and formal portraits of the nobles are closely comparable to the earlier Pratap Singh portrait (figure 1), the stronger colour range and denser composition make this a livelier and more distinctive work.

One of the nobles in the Prince of Wales darbar scene can be recognized in another inscribed painting by Chhajju, dated to the same year (figure 4).[9] It shows Padam Singh, again with elaborate dress and jewels, including a spectacular jewelled pendant in the form of a bird, facing Rathor Ram Singh, a noble who also appears at the bottom left of the darbar painting and whose name is given in the inscriptions on the reverse of both. A servant holding a *morchhal* is only partially visible. Chhajju's artistic competence makes it surprising that no paintings by him of the Jodhpur maharajas are known, and also that these are the only two works by him that have so far come to light.

4
Thakur Padam Singh with Rathor Ram Singh. By Chhajju of Jodhpur. Ghanerao, dated 1725. Opaque watercolour on paper; 25.3 x 19.1 cm. National Museum, New Delhi, no. 58.27/24.

There is a strong contrast between Chhajju's work and that of his contemporary Manno. An outdoor darbar scene (figure 5) showing Padam Singh seated between two rows of nobles is similar in composition to Chajju's version (figure 3) but lacks his fineness of line or detail and is recognizable as a work done by an artist outside the mainstream of Jodhpur court painting. Manno uses the earthy colours found frequently in Marwar *thikana* painting – ochres and greys – and which are suitable for this hunting party in which two of the nobles (one of whom is Ram Singh again) are holding guns. A shaggy dog described in the inscription on the reverse as *vannakutto* ("wild dog") and two smaller dogs accompany the group. The inscription also states that the painting was done at Ajmer in VS 1778/1721 CE, but it is likely that Manno was employed by Padam Singh in Ghanerao.

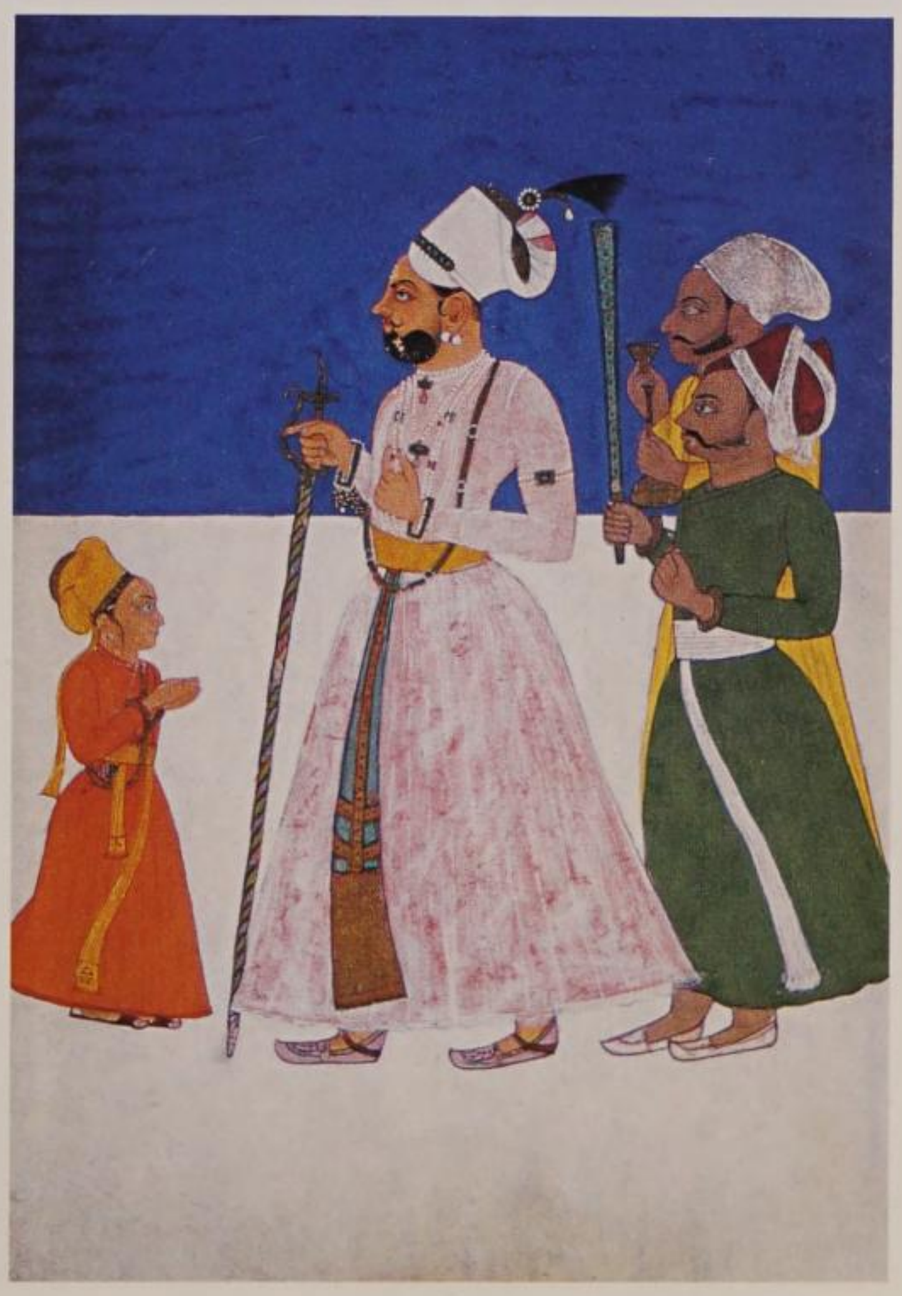
Another small painting of Padam Singh shows him walking with a long staff with a child (perhaps one of his sons, Kishan Singh or Bishan Singh) and two attendants (figure 6). This uninscribed painting may be of slightly

5
Hunting party of Thakur Padam Singh of Ghanerao. By Manno. Painted at Ajmer, dated 1721. Opaque watercolour on paper; 24.3 x 31.0 cm. Victoria & Albert Museum, London, no. IS 12-1978.

later date than figures 3–5, and while it bears some resemblance in terms of composition to Chhajju's standing portrait of Padam Singh (figure 4) it is obviously the work of a less accomplished local artist. A portrait of about the same date of Padam Singh by a Mewar artist was formerly in the royal collection at Udaipur and is now in the National Gallery of Victoria.[10]

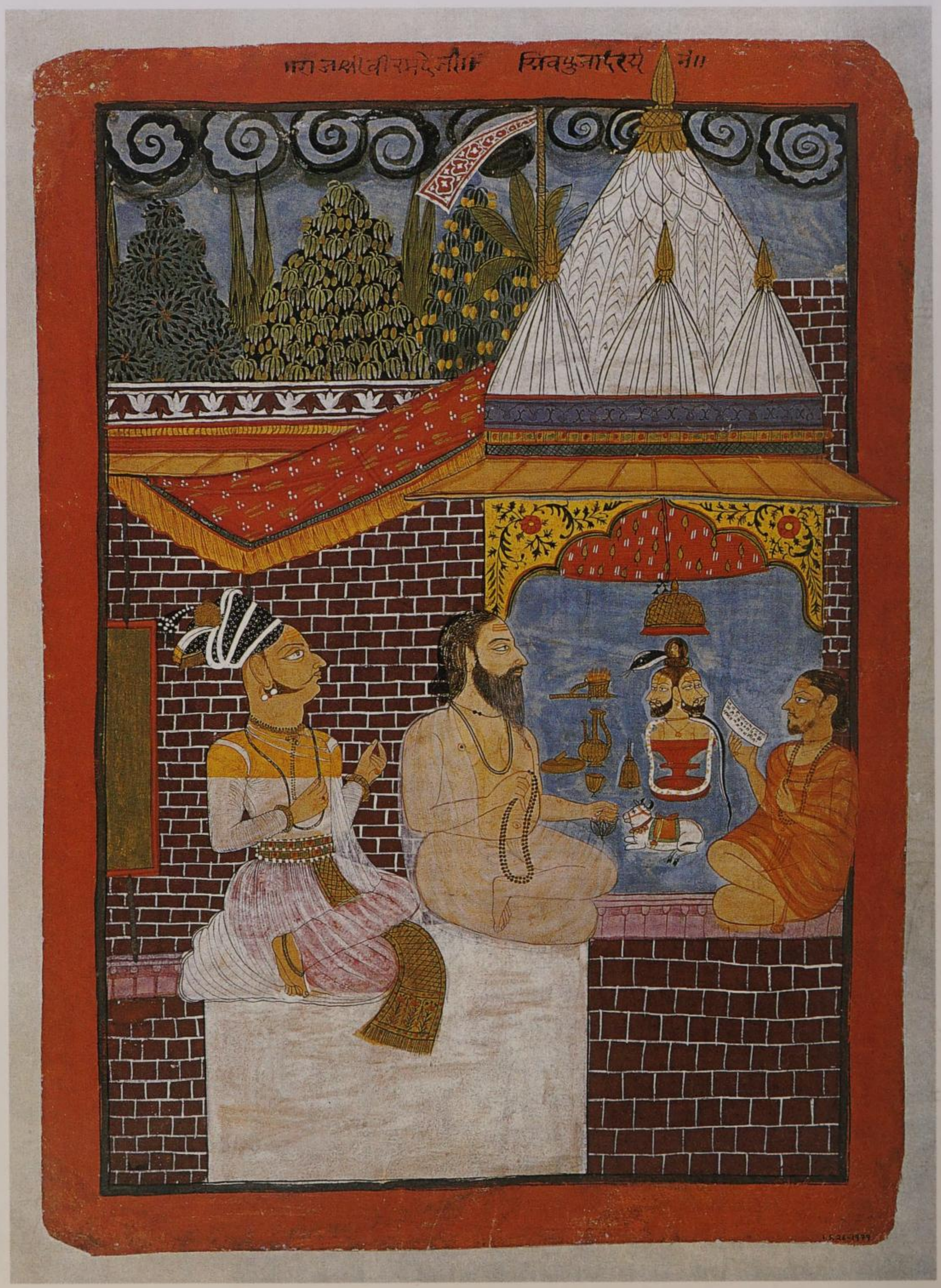
Viram Dev (r.1743–78)

Padam Singh was succeeded by his grandson Viram Dev, as Bishan Singh had been adopted by the ruling house of nearby Chanod and Kishan Singh had been killed in battle while a prince. Viram Dev continued the Ghanerao tradition of artistic patronage, and during his reign several Bikaneri artists apparently visited the court. One of the few surviving paintings of Viram Dev by a local, rather than Bikaneri, artist, is illustrated in figure 7. In this painting dating from about 1745, the Thakur is shown at



6
Thakur Padam Singh of Ghanerao with a prince and two attendants. Ghanerao, circa 1740. Opaque watercolour on paper. Collection of the late Kr Sangram Singh of Nawalgarh, Jaipur. Photograph: R. Crill.

7
Thakur Viram Dev of Ghanerao (r. 1743–78) worshipping at a Shiva shrine. Ghanerao, circa 1745–50. Opaque watercolour on paper; 40.9 x 29.9 cm. Victoria & Albert Museum, London, no. IS 26-1979.



8
Thakur Viram Dev of Ghanerao riding with attendants. By Shihabuddin of Bikaner. Dated 1770. Opaque watercolour on paper; 43.8 x 31.8 cm. Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich, no. UEA 576. Photograph: R. Skelton.

9
Thakur Viram Dev of Ghanerao with Maharaja Bijay Singh of Jodhpur at Ghanerao fort. By Husain of Bikaner. Dated 1764. Opaque watercolour on paper; 42.6 x 46.2 cm. Collection of the late Kr Sangram Singh of Nawalgarh, Jaipur. Photograph: R. Crill.

a Shiva shrine, together with two holy men. In the border above the painting is an inscription reading *maraj sri viramdevji siv puja darsan.* The rather crude but lively style of the painting is comparable to the *thikana* style of figure 5, but the composition has been elaborated with background trees and clouds and detailed depictions of the shrine, its four-faced linga and ritual accoutrements. The angular lines used to depict the human figures, especially their faces, is a feature of Marwar *thikana* painting that is common to several centres in the eighteenth century, especially the period circa 1720–50. It can be seen already in the Padam Singh hunting party (figure 5) and many other paintings could be cited in the same style. This frequently makes identification of the male subjects difficult, as they all seem to have the same rather severe profile and pointed side-whiskers.[11]

Paintings of Viram Dev by the Bikaneri artists Shihabuddin (figure 8) and Husain (figure 9), done some years later, illustrate the contrast between the *thikana* style and the court style of Bikaner. The Bikaner style of the mid-eighteenth century was highly refined and formal, with a lot of detail in textiles and jewellery and a predilection for small, round faces with pursed mouths and Persian-style ringlets for younger men. The towering turbans that had become fashionable in Jodhpur under Maharaja Ram Singh (r. 1750–51) were also a feature of these paintings, and the Bikaneri artists exaggerated their shape even more than their Jodhpur counterparts. In the painting of Viram Dev by Shihabuddin (figure 8), the ruler is depicted in the style of a Mughal or Deccani noble, riding a richly caparisoned horse, accompanied by attendants who carry his *huqqa,* spittoon, and staff of office. In the background, an army with horsemen and elephants is minutely depicted. Viram Dev's face is painted in typically Bikaneri style, and indeed he would be easily mistaken for Shihabuddin's other royal patron, Ram Singh of Jodhpur,[12] if he were not identified by an inscription on the reverse reading *maharaj sri viramdevji sabi ki vi chitara sahabdi ji ki.* The date is given as VS 1827, equivalent to 1770 CE. Another fine portrait of Viram Dev by Shihabuddin, dated 1774 CE, was in the collection of the late Karl Khandalavala.[13] In this formal painting, the ruler is shown standing facing his son and successor Kunwar Durjan Singh on a canopied terrace, against a background of trees and a hilly landscape at the top of the painting similar in style to that in figure 8. Viram Dev's portrait is exactly as in the equestrian painting (figure 8), while the youthful Durjan Singh is shown with the curled ringlets that were fashionable for young men in Bikaner at this time.

The painting of Viram Dev meeting Maharaja Bijay Singh of Jodhpur in Ghanerao fort (figure 9) is distinctly different in its composition to those by Shihabuddin (figure 8).

The inscription on the reverse gives the artist as Husain of Bikaner and the date as VS 1821/ 1764 CE. Although Husain is a Bikaneri artist, the painting owes more to the Mewar style of the period than to Bikaner. Maharana Ari Singh of Mewar (r. 1761–73) in particular was frequently depicted in rather small scale against a wide background of palace walls,[14] and here the coloured rugs hung over the balconies recall the tile work which often provides colour in the Mewar palace settings.[15]

Durjan Singh (r.1778–99)

Two paintings of Viram Dev's son Durjan Singh appear to have been painted by Jodhpur or Ghanerao artists, although based closely on Bikaneri models. An equestrian portrait in Umaid Bhavan Palace, Jodhpur[16] shows him as a young man, albeit without the loose Bikaner-style ringlets, and seems to belong to the nineteenth-century tradition of Thakur portraits: it was probably done in about 1800–10 after a presumed original of about 1780. It is inscribed on the reverse *thakur durjan singh viram devot ghanerao.* The second painting is of more interest (figure 10). It has overtones of both Bikaneri style and Mewar palace setting, with a blue-and-white tiled balustrade, and shows Durjan Singh at archery practice. The delicately painted tiles, turban, and flowering tree make this an unusually attractive painting datable to about 1780, with a charming contemporary border that perhaps emulates a European picture-frame. A further link with Mewar artists, many of whom had left the impoverished and troubled Udaipur court by the late 1760s, is provided by a striking painting of Durjan Singh by a Mewar artist named Narayan, dated to 1778 (figure 11).

Ajit Singh (r.1800–56)

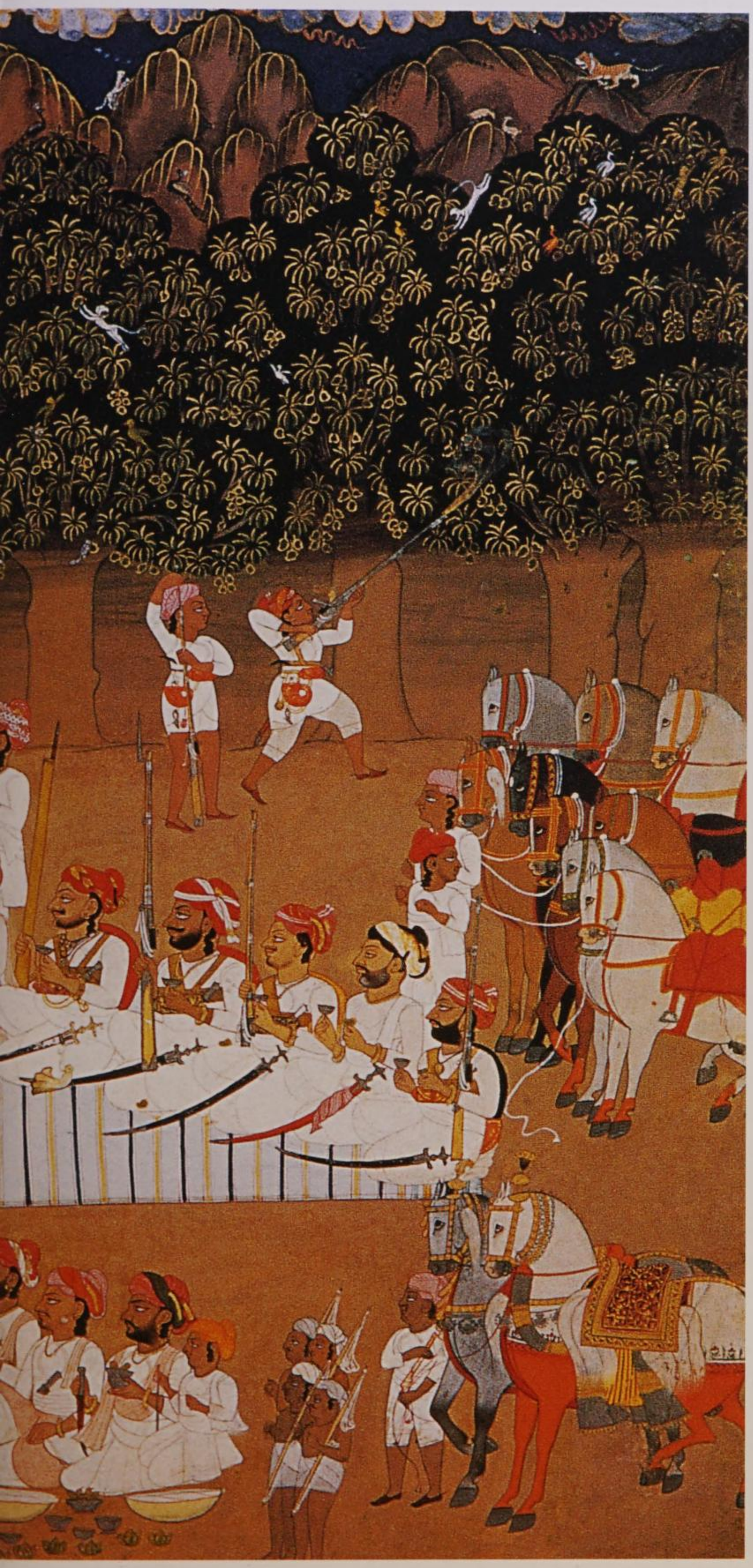
Durjan Singh's second son Ajit Singh assumed the *gaddi* after a brief period of rule by his elder brother Hamir Singh (r. 1799–1800), of whom no paintings have yet come to light. Ajit Singh was a contemporary of Maharaja Man Singh of Jodhpur (r. 1804–43) and paintings done for him reflect the prevalent Jodhpur court style to such an extent that portraits of Ajit Singh are frequently mistaken for those of Man Singh, especially as their facial features, beards, and turbans are depicted in strikingly similar fashion. Inscribed paintings provide evidence that the Jodhpur court painter Bhatti Dana worked for Ajit Singh: two paintings by Dana showing Ajit Singh watching a dancer (figure 12)[17] and hunting[18] are dated VS 1868/ 1811 CE. Another painting that can be attributed to Dana (figure 13) shows a young man, probably Kunwar Pratap Singh, Ajit

10
Thakur Durjan Singh of Ghanerao at archery practice. Ghanerao, circa 1780. Opaque watercolour on paper; 23 x 19 cm. Collection of the late Kr Sangram Singh of Nawalgarh, Jaipur. Photograph: R. Crill.

11
Thakur Durjan Singh of Ghanerao with ladies. By Narayan of Mewar. Dated 1778. Opaque watercolour on paper. Collection of the late Kr Sangram Singh of Nawalgarh, Jaipur. Photograph: R. Skelton.

12
Thakur Ajit Singh of Ghanerao (r. 1800–56) watching a dance performance. By Dana of Jodhpur. Dated 1811. Opaque watercolour on paper. Collection of the late Kr Sangram Singh of Nawalgarh, Jaipur. Photograph: R. Crill.

13
Kunwar Pratap Singh of Ghanerao watching a dance performance. By a Jodhpur artist, probably Dana. Circa 1810–15. Opaque watercolour on paper; 37 x 43 cm. Collection of the late Kr Sangram Singh of Nawalgarh, Jaipur. Photograph: R. Crill.



14
Thakur Ajit Singh of Ghanerao, Kunwar Pratap Singh, and nobles at an open-air gathering. By Raso. Ghanerao, dated 1825. Opaque watercolour on paper; 42.5 x 58.0 cm. Collection of the late Kr Sangram Singh of Nawalgarh, Jaipur. Photograph: R. Crill.

Singh's son, watching a dancer in a very similar composition to that of figure 12. This painting bears a later inscription on the reverse identifying the main subject as Ajit Singh, but this young man bears no resemblance to the Thakur with his beard and pointed nose as shown in paintings such as figure 12 and the hunt scene, and is much closer in appearance to Pratap Singh as he is shown some years later in figures 14 and 15. (As was apparent with figure 1, later inscriptions identifying the subjects on paintings in the Sangram Singh collection are not always trustworthy).

Of the artists who worked for the Ghanerao Thakurs, we know most about the career of Dana, through his work at the Jodhpur court. Dana, also called Bhatti Dana, was the son of Amar Das, one of the most competent and prolific of Man Singh's court artists. Inscribed works by Dana provide evidence that he was working for Man Singh early in his reign: one of his most striking early works is a large processional scene done in about 1805–10 depicting Man Singh returning from his exile in Jalor to assume the throne of Jodhpur.[19] A much smaller processional scene showing Thakur Ajit Singh of Ghanerao on elephantback was painted by him in about 1820.[20] Dana went on to work for Man Singh's successor Takhat Singh (r. 1843–73) and painted a scene of the ruler with ladies at Divali in about 1850.[21] We know that his son Babhuta also worked for Takhat Singh from a small painting of the 25-year-old ruler dated VS 1902/1845 CE.[22]

Kunwar Pratap Singh did not live to become Thakur of Ghanerao, but is nevertheless seen in several paintings both with and without his father. A painting of Ajit Singh with Pratap Singh at worship, perhaps also by Dana, in the Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi,[23] is datable to about 1820. Pratap Singh and Ajit Singh are equally prominent in one of the finest pictures done during Ajit Singh's rule, a painting by Raso dated VS 1882/1825 CE (figure 14) showing an outdoor gathering with the Thakur, his son, attendant nobles, and even the artist himself, seated on a striped durrie. Attendants hunt, prepare food, and play music in the surrounding landscape. Raso, who is named in the reverse inscription as the artist, was probably a Jodhpur court painter, although only one other painting by him, a portrait of one of Man Singh's Nath gurus, has so far come to light. Among the named courtiers seated with the Thakur, the inscription names Raso as the second from the right, in a black turban.

Pratap Singh may also be identified as the central figure in the splendid painting of a noble with ladies in a banana grove (figure 15).[24] Painted by an unknown Jodhpur artist, this unusual composition in which the human subjects are dwarfed by trees is apparently unique in Jodhpur painting, where outdoor scenes are usually set in more open landscapes or gardens. Even the use of banana rather than mango or other trees is almost unknown in Jodhpur. It may be necessary to look to Mewar for the inspiration for this scene, as the closest parallel seems to be a painting of about the same date which shows Radha and Krishna embracing in the centre of a dense forest of banana trees.[25]

Had Pratap Singh lived, there is little doubt that painting would have continued to flourish at Ghanerao, especially as we know from several works in the Sangram Singh collection that he had aspirations as an artist himself. Confining himself to flower studies and decorative designs with marked European influence, Pratap Singh's work is amateurish and lively, but seems not to have had the benefit of training from local or Jodhpur artists. Unaccountably, however, no paintings of Pratap Singh or his father have so far come to light which can be dated later than about 1830, leaving us to speculate as to why an unbroken

15
A noble, probably Kunwar Pratap Singh of Ghanerao, with ladies in a banana grove. Jodhpur, circa 1825. Opaque watercolour on paper; 45.7 x 30.8 cm. Private collection. Photograph: R. Skelton.

line of patronage in this *thikana* came to an apparently abrupt end.

NOTES

1. I am immensely indebted to the late Kr Sangram Singh for allowing me access to his collection over a period of several years, and for the valuable information he supplied. I am also grateful to his son, Kr Surya Vijay Singh, for continuing this tradition of generosity and for granting permission to publish paintings from the collection in this article.
2. Illustrated in R. Crill, *Marwar Painting: A History of the Jodhpur Style,* Mumbai, 1999, fig. 33.
3. Crill, op. cit., fig. 35; R.C. Sharma et al., *Alamkara: 5000 Years of Indian Art,* Singapore, 1994, no. 59.
4. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, no. 1990.1283, illustrated in Crill, op. cit., fig. 29. The inscription in the upper border identifying the subject as Maharaja Bakhat Singh appears to be a misidentification, probably by a Mewar clerk.
5. Crill, op. cit., figs. 22-24.
6. Ibid., figs. 37-40.
7. Illustrated in Sotheby's catalogue July 2, 1984, lot 136.
8. Published in W.G. Archer, *Indian Miniatures,* London, 1960, pl. 57, and R. Crill, op. cit., fig. 53.
9. Published in O.P. Sharma, *Indian Miniature Painting,* Brussels, 1974, no. 68, pl. 70, where Padam Singh's companion is misidentified as "Sham Singh".
10. A. Topsfield, *Paintings from Rajasthan in the National Gallery of Victoria,* Melbourne, 1980, no. 131 (not illustrated). I am grateful to Andrew Topsfield for this information.
11. See for example Crill, op. cit., figs. 44-50.
12. A portrait of Ram Singh with an attendant is inscribed with the name of Shihabuddin son of Abdullah Usta (Crill, op. cit., fig. 62). A portrait of Shihabuddin himself is illustrated in K. Khandalavala, M. Chandra, and P. Chandra, *Miniature Painting* [Khajanchi collection catalogue], New Delhi, 1960, no. 120, fig. 88.
13. Illustrated in K. Khandalavala, "Problems of Rajasthani Painting", *Marg,* XI, 2, 1958, fig. 15, where the artist is wrongly given as "Haibuddin" and Durjan Singh is misidentified as "Dinjam Singh".
14. See for example, A. Topsfield, op. cit, no. 167; A. Topsfield, *The City Palace Museum Udaipur: Paintings of Mewar Court Life,* Ahmedabad, 1990, nos. 19, 22.
15. Viram Dev had close contacts with the Udaipur court, and is shown playing Holi with Maharana Raj Singh II in a 1754 painting in the National Museum, New Delhi (A. Topsfield, "Ketelaar's embassy and the Farangi theme in the art of Udaipur", *Oriental Art,* XXX, 4, Winter 1984, fig. 17 and n. 83). As James Tod shows (e.g. *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan,* ed. William Crooke, Delhi, 1971, vol. II, pp. 798-99), Ghanerao at different times in its history gave allegiance to the Mewar Rana rather than to Jodhpur.
16. Unpublished.
17. Published in H. Goetz, "Marwar (with some paintings from Jodhpur in the collection of Kumar Sangram Singh)" *Marg,* XI, 2, 1958, p. 47, fig. 2, where the date is wrongly given as 1825 AD.
18. In the collection of the late Kr Sangram Singh of Nawalgarh. Unpublished.
19. Crill, op. cit., fig. 94.
20. Kr Sangram Singh collection. Unpublished.
21. Crill, op. cit., fig. 145.
22. Umaid Bhavan Palace, Jodhpur, acc. no. 53(2). Unpublished.
23. BKB acc. no. 3472. Unpublished.
24. Published in A. Topsfield, "Painting for the Rajput Courts", in *The Arts of India,* ed. Basil Gray, Oxford, 1981, fig. 182 (where the subject is identified as Maharaja Man Singh), and R. Crill, op. cit., fig. 100.
25. National Museum, New Delhi, no. 56.541. Unpublished.

A *HITOPADESHA* MANUSCRIPT OF 1761–62 FROM UNIARA

J.P. Losty

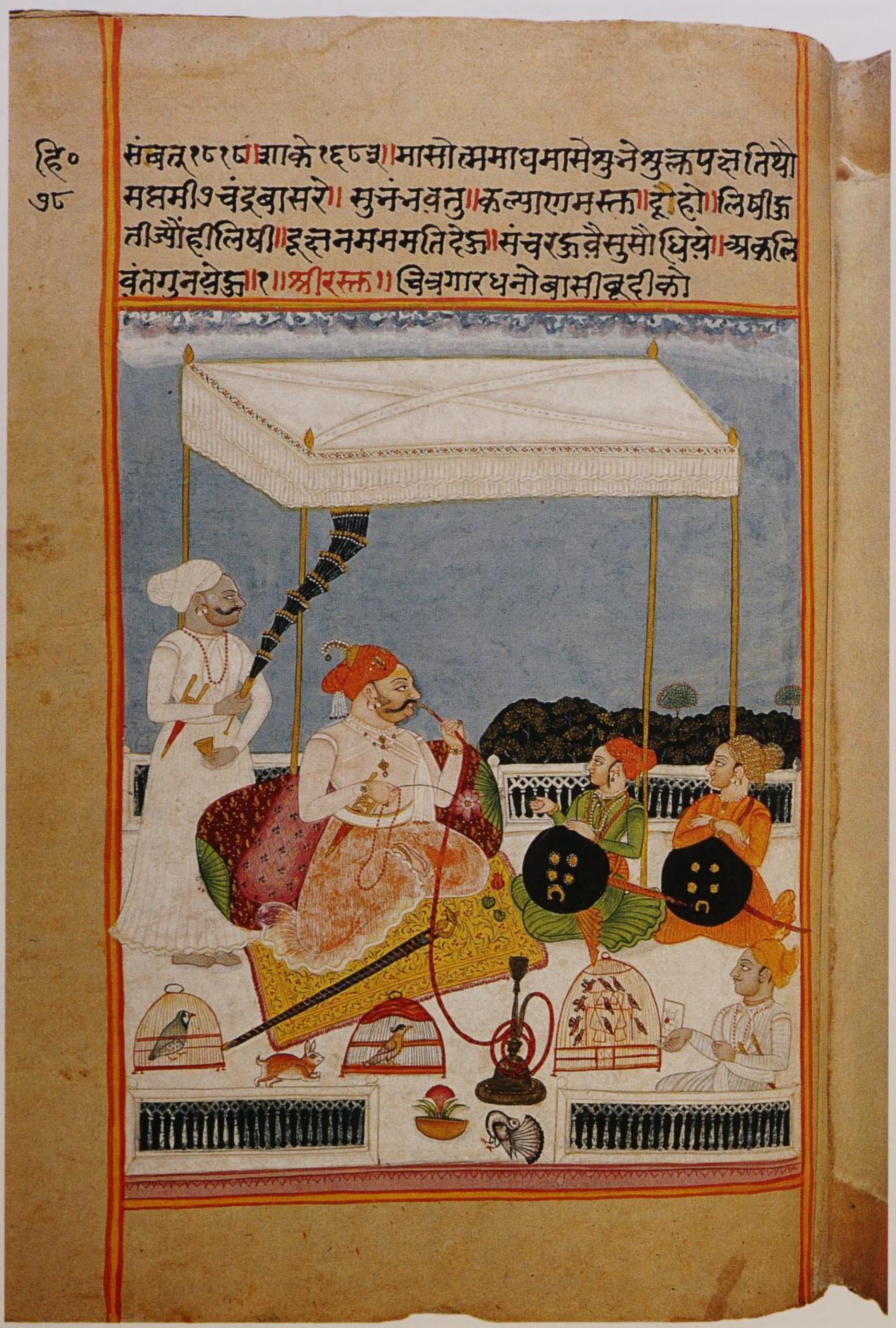
The Manuscript

An illustrated manuscript of the *Hitopadesha* or Book of Good Counsel was acquired by the British Library in 1980 but has not hitherto been published in detail. The *Hitopadesha* is the well-known book of fables, consisting of four books of stories told by a sage to a king's sons to teach them wisdom and polity. It is a recast, arranged by an otherwise anonymous Narayana towards the end of the first millennium CE, of the much earlier and more famous *Panchatantra*, the Five Books of moral fables. The British Library's manuscript (Or.MS.13934), however, is not of the Sanskrit version but of an anonymous translation into Hindi.

The manuscript is one of those Rajasthani manuscripts from court studios of the eighteenth century which were produced as a Rajput response to the Mughal manuscript tradition in India, so that like a Mughal manuscript it is in a vertical sewn format, rather than in the normal Hindu loose-leaf *pothi* tradition, and is bound within a leather cover. Instead of the normal collection of sewn gatherings of a Mughal manuscript, this one consists of one gigantic gathering, the forty-three bifoliums, or double leaves, of thick and slightly burnished paper, being folded and sewn through the middle along with the cover in one single section by means of a thick cord. The cover consists of thin card cased in brown leather, and is decorated with a simple blind-tooled floral scroll. The cord is prolonged from the back of the spine and wrapped securely around the entire manuscript. The similarity to Mughal manuscripts is continued by the use of a flap (*jihva* or tongue), which in Hindu manuscripts is usually left resting on the top cover, rather than under it as in a Mughal binding. The flap is a very necessary part of this particular tradition, since the structure of the manuscript leaves the edges of the central portion of the gathering protruding (the bifoliums being all of the same size) and hence in need of protection.

This particular copy of the *Hitopadesha* contains no less than 133 paintings, which are disposed for the most part across the centre of the page, with text above and below. This not particularly elegant solution to the problems of the balance between text and illustration is found in a few Mughal manuscripts of the seventeenth century, but is not common in any period. Illustrated manuscripts of either the *Panchatantra* or the *Hitopadesha* from any Rajput or other Hindu school are rare, compared with the known Mughal illustrated manuscripts of the comparable fable books in Persian, *Anvar-i Suhayli* and *'Iyar-i-Danish*. Both of these latter texts are versions in Persian from the Arabic *Kalila u Dimna*, itself a recast via the Syriac and Pahlavi from the original Sanskrit version of the *Panchatantra*.

1
Final illustration and beginning of colophon. The sage Vishnusharman finishes instructing the two princes who return home to their father. Page size: 34.0 x 24.5 cm; painting size: 17 x 18 cm. Or.MS.13934, f.78r.



2
End of colophon. Rao Raja Sardar Singh of Uniara (r. 1740–77) with his sons Jasvant Singh and Maha Singh, with a self-portrait by the artist Dhano. Page size: 34.0 x 24.5 cm; painting size: 23 x 18 cm. Or.MS.13934, f.78v.

Our manuscript was commissioned in Samvat 1818/1761–62 CE by a prince, named as the *Kavar* Jaisvant Singh. The style of the illustrations points towards southeast Rajasthan in the environs of Bundi, and in fact this prince must be Kunvar Jasvant Singh, the only legitimate son of Rao Raja Sardar Singh of Uniara (r. 1740–77). The colophon of the manuscript (figures 1 and 2) states that the brahmin Chiramji Rajarama from Banhata (perhaps equivalent to Baneta, one of the four parganas of Uniara) was the scribe and that Dhano from Bundi was the artist (*chitragara dhano basi budiko*). The manuscript was commissioned by the *dharmamurti-go-brahmana-pratipalaka* (Incarnation of Dharma and Protector of cows and brahmins) *maharaja [kaivara kavaraji shri-Jaisavam]ta-simhaji.* The portion in square brackets has been altered and added to, but certainly by the same scribe. *Shri-Jaisavam* is written outside the text frame at the end of this line and the beginning of the next one. Whatever the original colophon statement, the result we have now is a mess: the meaning of *kaivara* is simply unclear. Since Jaisvant is written instead of Jasvant, and *maharaja* with three long "A"s, it is possible that the scribe, now breaking into Sanskrit for the first time, is overindulging in learned and unnecessary "*vriddhi*" formations, and *kaivar* is meant for *kevar,* i.e. Jasvant is the "only" prince, a change to the colophon made when his elder and illegitimate brother Maha Singh was exiled.

Royal Portraits

Little has been written about Uniara history and art, and this paper relies heavily on what has been unearthed in Jaipur and Uniara by Agrawal and Beach. Both Jasvant Singh and Maha Singh are depicted with their father in two portraits at the end of this volume (figures 2 and 4). The formal court portrait (figure 2) which ends the text of the *Hitopadesha* shows Rao Raja Sardar Singh seated under a canopy smoking a hookah and holding a *rudraksha,* while the Raja's two sons are both depicted seated facing him holding swords and shields. According to convention, they are naturally depicted smaller than their father, and their ages appear to be about sixteen and eighteen respectively. The style clearly is derived from that of Bundi – Beach (figs. 38-39) has

3 King Sudarshana consults the astrologers as to what to do with his errant sons. 7.5 x 18.0 cm. Or.MS.13934, f.4r.

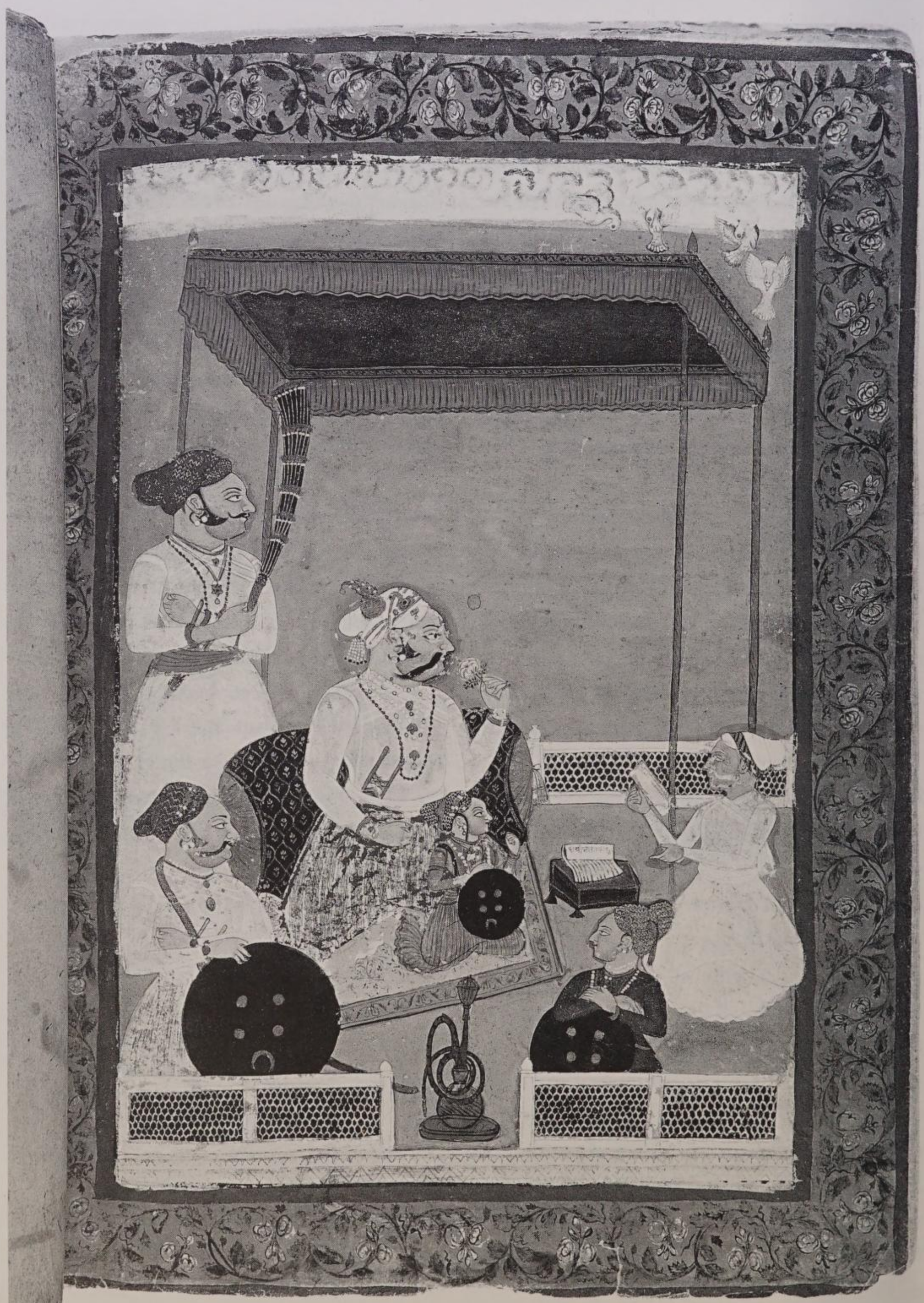
compared similar formal portraits of Sardar Singh with contemporary portraits of Umed Singh of Bundi with his sons. The composition is typical of royal Rajput portraits, though here an unusual touch is that the artist Dhano has depicted himself in the bottom corner, holding a picture of an elephant. The birds and a rabbit add a charming footnote to this manuscript of animal fables ostensibly commissioned by the young prince. Since the text of the *Hitopadesha* is couched in the form of moral and political instruction for young princes, the frame story could easily be adapted to refer to the circumstances of the manuscript's production. An early painting in the manuscript (figure 3) indeed shows the raja of the frame story and his two sons becoming identified with Sardar Singh and his two in a court scene similar to the Uniara court scenes. It would however be as well to avoid concluding that the princes lived in a royal nursery furnished with the equivalent of Beatrix Potter wallpaper. The years of the manuscript's production witnessed crisis after crisis in Uniara's affairs, while Jasvant Singh can scarcely have been born before he is credited with the leadership of a force despatched in 1744 in support of Jaipur's claimant to the Bundi throne. The disparity between this historical record and the perhaps slightly too youthful appearance of the prince in this colophon portrait suggests that in fact the manuscript and its paintings must have been in production over a period of several years; and that the colophon portraits must have been among the earliest painted by Dhano.

A second formal darbar portrait, not in quite such good condition, occurs at the very end of the volume (figure 4). Here Sardar Singh has Jasvant Singh, looking somewhat younger, seated on the carpet beside him, while Maha Singh sits below, facing them. Two *sardar*s on the left are in attendance, one with the *morchhal*. The occasion of this portrait would seem to be the presentation of a manuscript by the person facing Sardar Singh, whom we assume to be the brahmin Chiramji Rajarama, the scribe of the *Hitopadesha* manuscript and also of the *Pothi Bharata* which is the inscription on the manuscript lying on the stool between them. The *pothi* which Rajarama is holding is badly flaked, but may originally have had the scribe's name upon it. Beach (figs. 48-49) has published pages from another manuscript which was a royal commission from Sardar Singh, a *Bhagavata Purana* of 1759, which includes a portrait of Sardar Singh and an even younger Jasvant Singh engaged in worshipping an image of Krishna on a swing. Here the artist is named as Mira Bagas (Mir Baksh?), another artist clearly working originally in a Bundi style.

The Uniara State

Uniara was in 1762 a small and independent state precariously sandwiched between Jaipur and Bundi, with the great fortress of Ranthambhor on its eastern flank. During the course of the eighteenth century under Rao Ajit Singh and his successor Rao Sardar Singh, Uniara gradually became a subsidiary *thikana* of the ruling Kachhwaha house of Amber/Jaipur, although maintaining certain ancient rights of independence. The Uniara royal house was particularly involved with Sawai Raja Jai Singh of Jaipur's attempt to install on the *gaddi* of Bundi in 1729 his nominee, Dalel Singh of Kawar, who was in fact married to Sardar Singh's daughter, formally adopted by Jaipur for the occasion. Up to Jai Singh's death in 1744, this policy was successful, since his alliance with the Marathas saved Jaipur and its client states from Maratha attacks, but the ensuing succession struggle in Jaipur exposed Uniara to the depredations which they had hitherto escaped. In 1755 the Mughal commander of the great fortress of Ranthambhor surrendered it to

4
Rao Raja Sardar Singh of Uniara (r. 1740–77) with his sons Jasvant Singh and Maha Singh. Page size: 34.0 x 24.5 cm; painting size: 28.0 x 18.5 cm.
Or.MS.13934, f.8lr.



Jaipur, as he no longer had the resources to defend it. The Marathas regarded Ranthambhor as rightfully theirs, and harried all the country around, including Uniara. Jaipur forces came to Uniara's assistance, and the Marathas were beaten at Kakor in the Uniara state in 1759. But the Marathas returned and besieged Uniara, and imposed a heavy financial penalty on Sardar Singh, this time left without help from Jaipur.

The immediate events around 1760 are of considerable interest in this story, since the times scarcely seemed propitious for the development of a court studio producing illustrated manuscripts. The Marathas had twice invaded the little state, at a prodigious cost to Sardar Singh in blood and treasure. In 1759 the new emperor Shah 'Alam had conferred a *mansab* of 5,000 foot and 2,000 horse and the title of Rao Raja Bahadur upon Sardar Singh, a grant which apparently so enraged Madho Singh of Jaipur, already incensed that the Marathas had seen fit to punish his vassal without involving him, that he made a grant of Uniara to Sardar Singh's younger brother Indar Singh. In 1761 Jaipur forces besieged Uniara, bombarding and then plundering the town, and Sardar Singh was forced to pay a fine of twenty lakhs to Madho Singh. Notwithstanding, Sardar Singh and Madho Singh were reconciled, and Uniara continued to pay homage to Jaipur; but for its loyalty for the remainder of the century Uniara was left defenceless against the Marathas who periodically mauled it; and had to pay the annual tribute. Jasvant Singh never ascended the *gaddi,* having been murdered by partisans of his uncle Indar Singh, and it was his son Bishen Singh who succeeded.

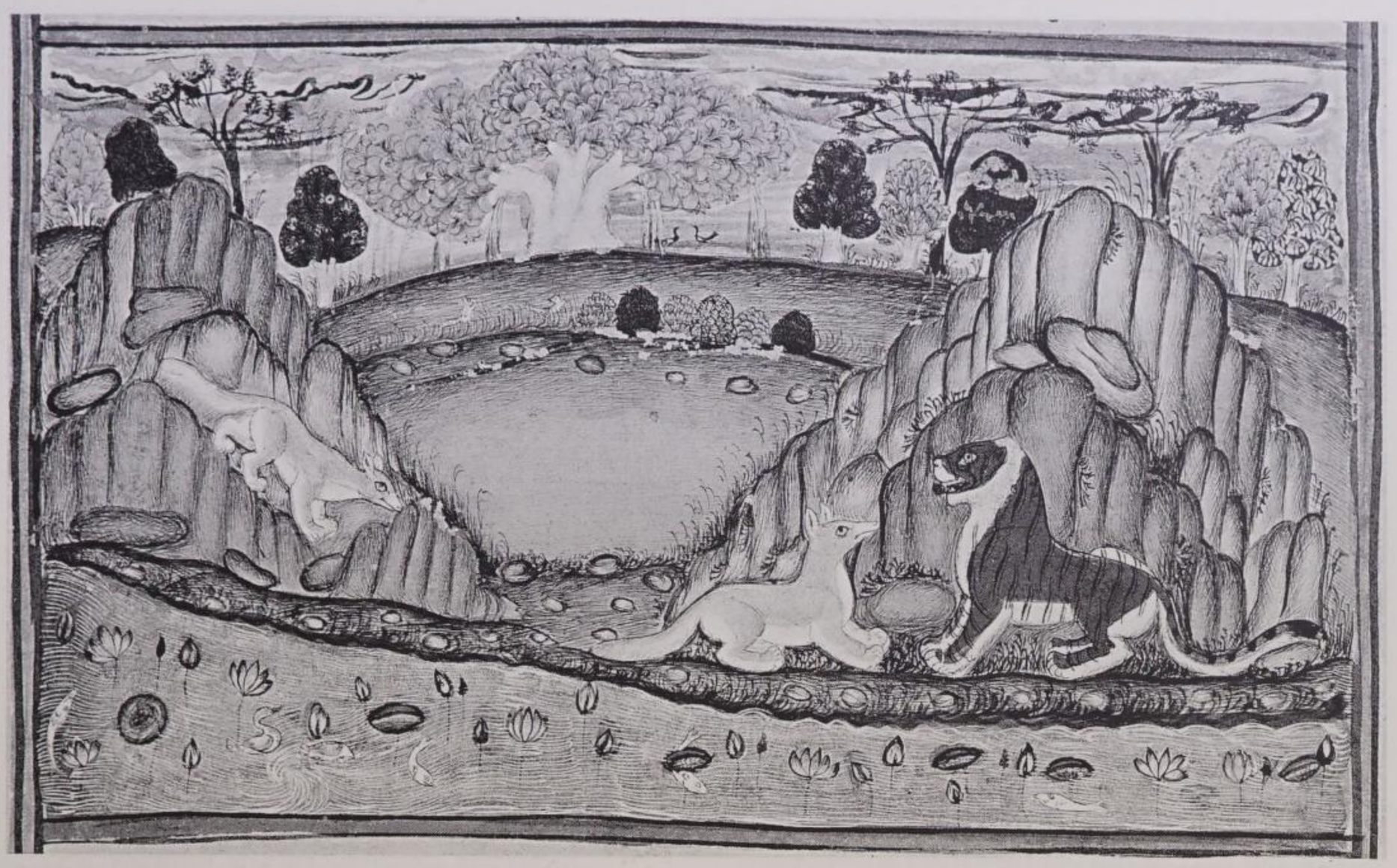
The Paintings

It is at first sight surprising that two of Uniara's artists from the mid-eighteenth century, at a time when the ruler Sardar Singh was so closely allied to Jaipur as a (vain) protection against the marauding Marathas, should have come from Bundi. We know nothing of the origins of the principal painter of Sardar Singh's reign, Mira Bagas, other than that his style shows clearly he is from Bundi. The desperate struggle to recover their patrimony in which Budh Singh of Bundi and his son Umed Singh were constantly engaged (as so memorably described in Tod's *Annals*), meant that there was little occasion for artists to stay in Bundi itself if they could find employment elsewhere. Since Dalel Singh, the Bundi usurper from 1729, was married to the daughter of Sardar Singh of Uniara, it is possible, as Beach thinks, that this occasioned the openness of Uniara to Bundi artistic influence. However, no Uniara manuscript seems as yet to be earlier than the 1759 *Bhagavata Purana,* illustrated by the Bundi artist Mira Bagas. In the event it seems that Uniara's increase of status in that year with the grant of the title of Rao Raja to Sardar Singh may have precipitated him into forming a court studio as would seem more fitting to this rank.

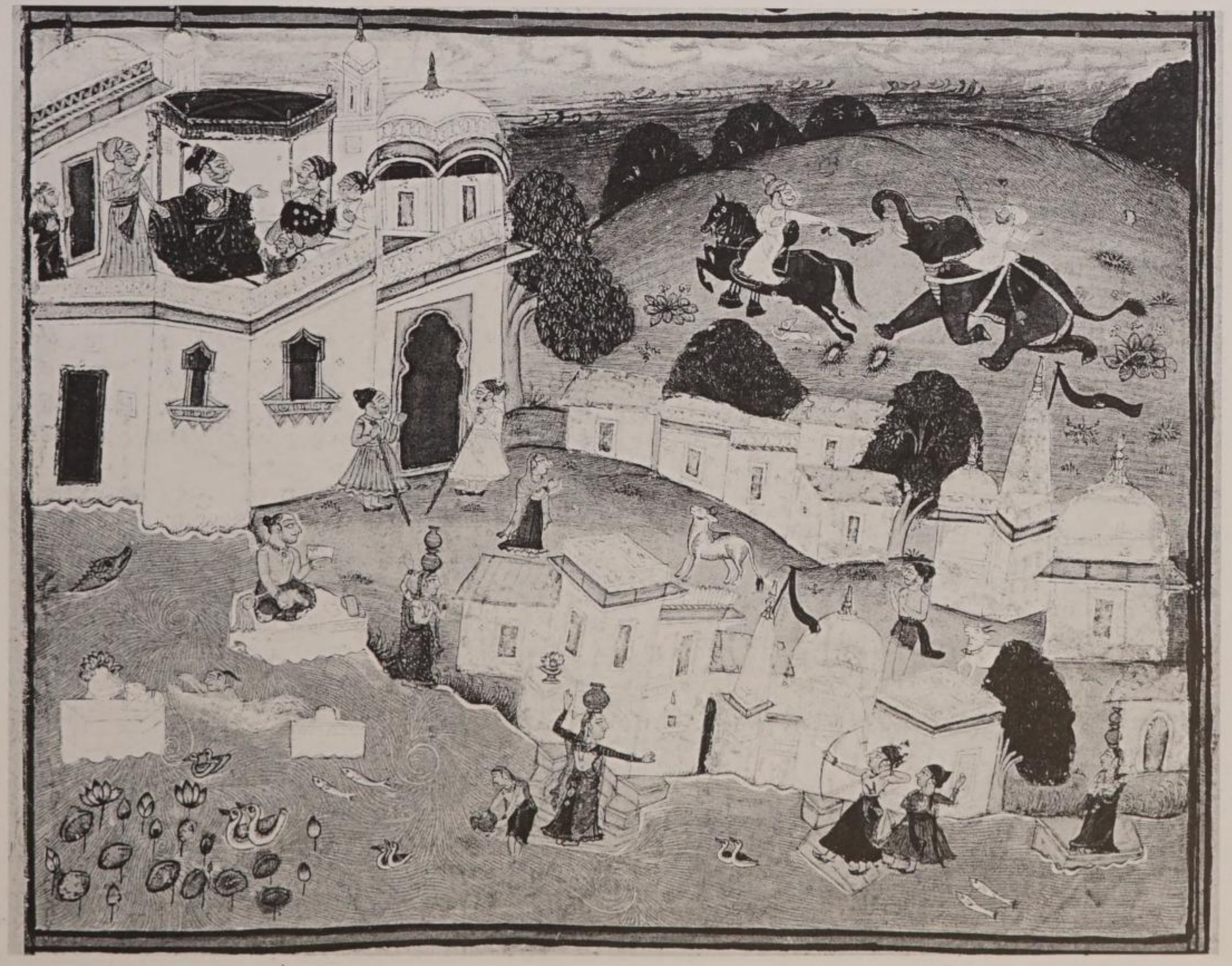
A painting of a boar hunt in the mid-eighteenth century style of Bundi (figure 5) vividly suggests the immediate artistic milieu from which Dhano sprang. Here Dip Singh, the younger brother of Umed Singh of Bundi, spears a boar from on horseback, against a background of a yellow hill overpainted with broad green outlines, with scrubby trees silhouetted on the horizon against a vivid orange sky enlivened by squiggly multicoloured clouds. This type of landscape would seem to be a reflection of the actual landscape of southeast Rajasthan, rather than the ideal, luxuriantly flowering landscapes used for imagined scenes, such as for *ragamala* and similar sets. The style of Mira Bagas and of Dhano continued the norm for Uniara painting until the end of Sardar Singh's reign in 1777, but with the new reign stylistic allegiance soon followed political,

5
Dip Singh of Bundi hunting boar. Bundi style, circa 1750. 18.5 x 30.0 cm. Israel Museum, 1145.38. Copyright: The Israel Museum, Jerusalem. Photograph courtesy Catherine Glynn.

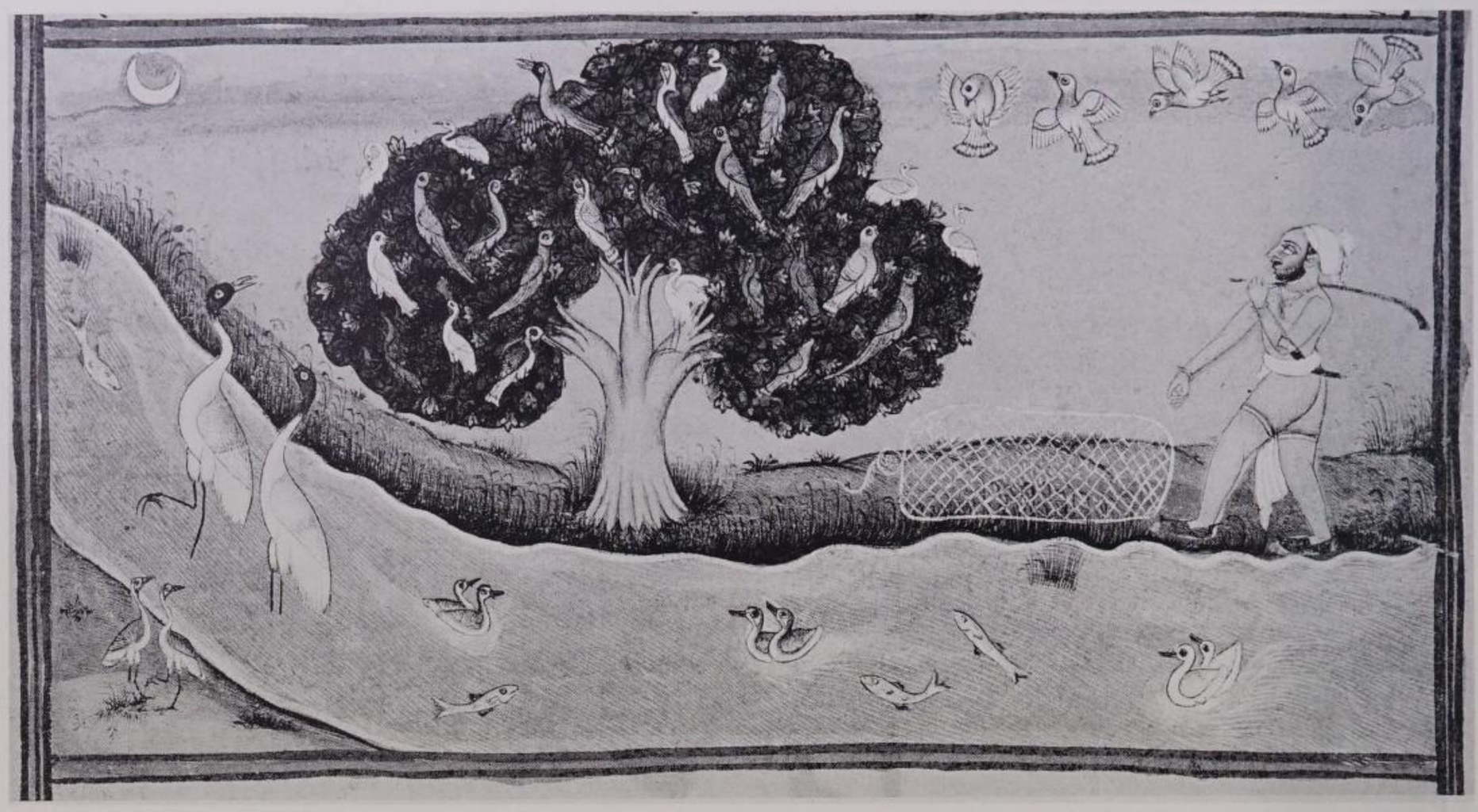
6
Parvati and Nandi pay homage to Shiva, from whose hair issues the Ganga. 14.5 x 18.0 cm. Or.MS.13934, f.2r.



7
The "lion" king Pingalaka tells the jackal Damanaka, with Karataka looking on, that he intends to abandon the forest as he is afraid of the terrible noises he is hearing. 10.5 x 17.5 cm. Or.MS.13934, f.33v.



8
King Sudarshana consults his ministers while his errant sons play pranks by the river. 14 x 18 cm. Or.MS.13934, f.3r.



9
At dawn the crow in the simul tree sees the fowler with his net aiming to trap the flock of doves. 9.5 x 18.0 cm. Or.MS.13934, f.5v.

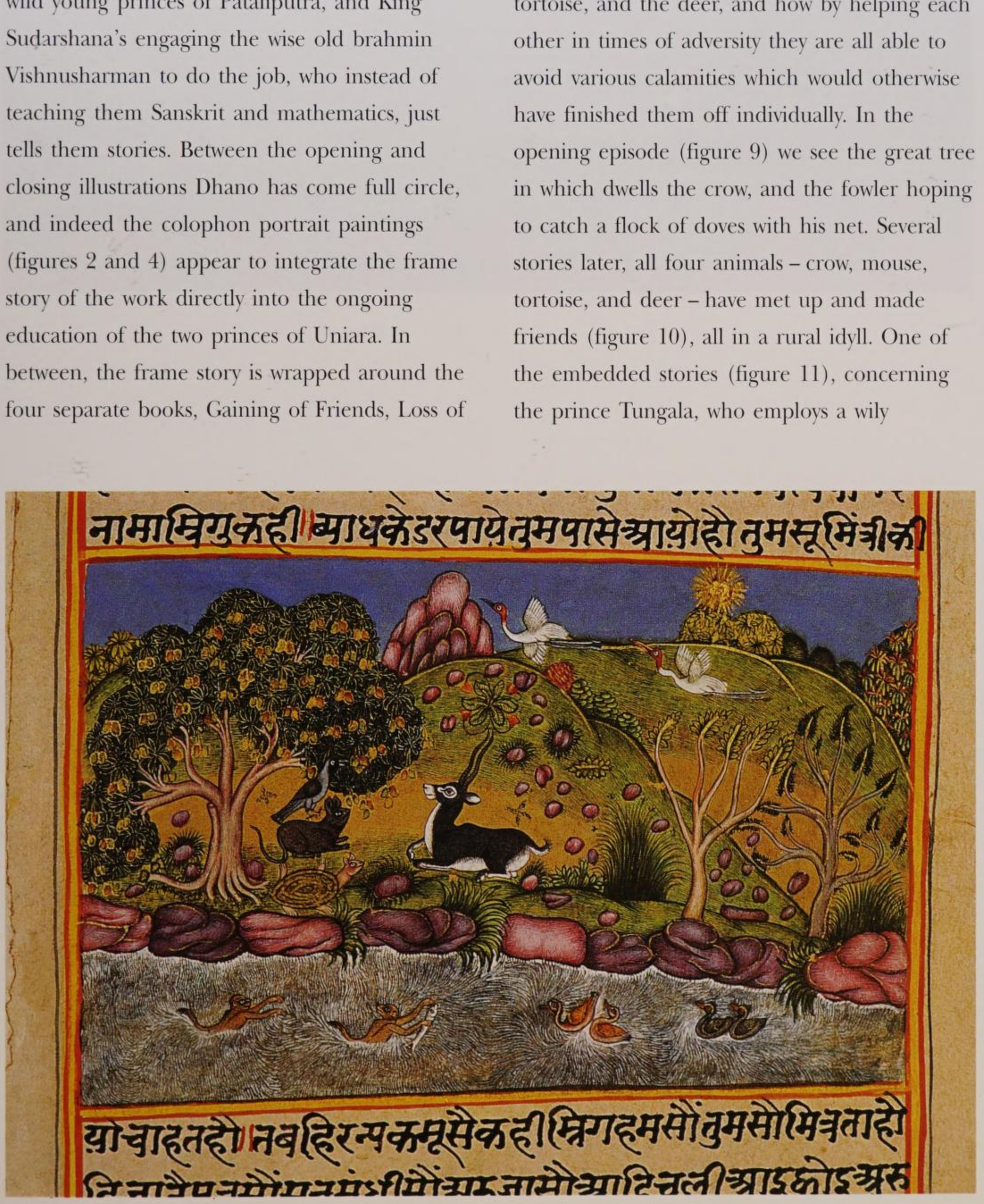
and by the end of the century the Uniara style was closely linked to Jaipur's.

Dhano's paintings illustrating the text of the manuscript are necessarily reduced in size and complexity from Bundi models. Dhano makes use of two basic types of composition in his work. For most of the animal fables, he uses a landscape setting of gently rounded hills of yellow overpainted with green, against which a single great tree is often posed; one of two opening paintings with divine images, that of Shiva and Parvati (figure 6), shows this well. In others, rocks and mountains are pyramids, often gently rounded off, divided by vertical striations into fingers of various shades of purple and mauve. Across the bottom invariably runs a stream, silver-grey, with whirlpools and eddies skilfully suggested by overpainted white lines. Forests are suggested by a row of scrawnier trees along the hilltops, with branches bare until their ends. Skies are turbulent, with white or dark-coloured clouds, and streaked with orange and purple. These paintings are filled with an abundance of bird and plant life. A painting illustrating the frame story of the second book, Loss of Friends (figure 7), exhibits most of these characteristics admirably.

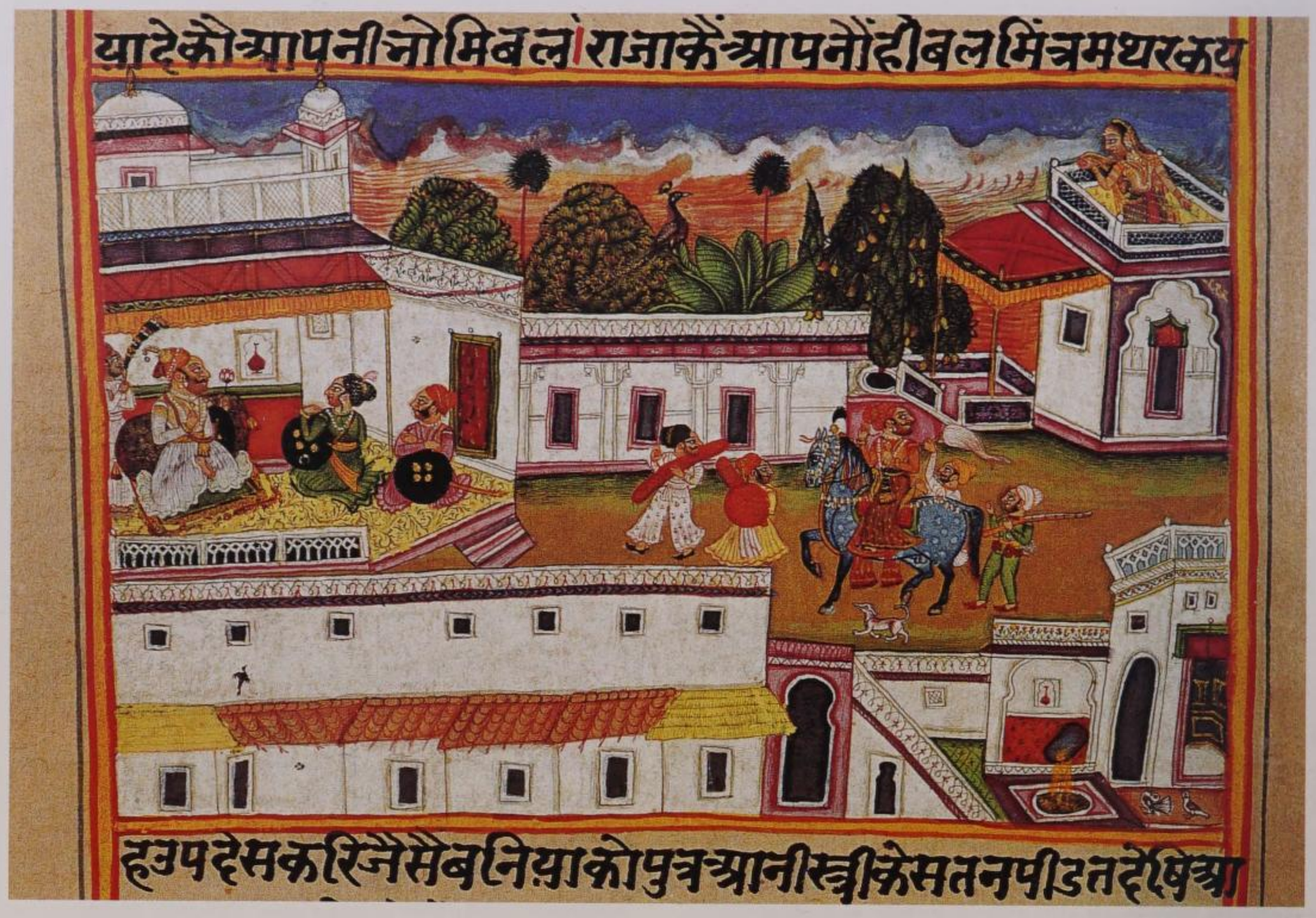
In scenes involving mostly humans, Dhano adopts a bird's-eye view of a town or village, with its main street, whitewashed houses with tiled roofs on both sides, a grander palace with terraces and cupolas, various temples, perhaps a river alongside and the country outside. The main characters are often only small parts of the composition. While these scenes are usually less successful aesthetically than those involving landscape, they nonetheless afford a highly interesting viewpoint into Rajasthani life in the mid-eighteenth century both architecturally and socially, for these scenes are filled with fascinating detail of people going about their daily lives. A fine painting (figure 1) ends the text proper, a bird's-eye view of the palace and town. It is the river which captures attention, with townspeople bathing, swimming, boating, and worshipping the Shivalinga in the water, and the country beyond the town with its running elephant and horse. Only eventually does the eye pick up Vishnusharman and the two princes on a terrace by the river, and then the princes again with their father King Sudarshana in the palace. The whole composition is a reflection of one of the

opening illustrations (figure 8) which shows exactly the same urban setting and the same goings on, but the naughty princes are mucking about by the river, one attempting to shoot the pot off a woman's head with his arrow, while the king is taking counsel with his ministers as to what to do about them.

This brings us to the way Dhano illustrates the text of the *Hitopadesha,* whose frame story depicts the need to educate the two wild young princes of Pataliputra, and King Sudarshana's engaging the wise old brahmin Vishnusharman to do the job, who instead of teaching them Sanskrit and mathematics, just tells them stories. Between the opening and closing illustrations Dhano has come full circle, and indeed the colophon portrait paintings (figures 2 and 4) appear to integrate the frame story of the work directly into the ongoing education of the two princes of Uniara. In between, the frame story is wrapped around the four separate books, Gaining of Friends, Loss of Friends, War, and Peace, all of which have their own individual frame stories. The number of illustrations at the artist's disposal enables him to treat the major framing stories systematically and to include all the principal events, while the stories within of course tend to get a more summary treatment of just one or two pictures. The framing story of the first book, Gaining of Friends, concerns the friendship which is established between the crow, the mouse, the tortoise, and the deer, and how by helping each other in times of adversity they are all able to avoid various calamities which would otherwise have finished them off individually. In the opening episode (figure 9) we see the great tree in which dwells the crow, and the fowler hoping to catch a flock of doves with his net. Several stories later, all four animals – crow, mouse, tortoise, and deer – have met up and made friends (figure 10), all in a rural idyll. One of the embedded stories (figure 11), concerning the prince Tungala, who employs a wily



10
The deer makes friends with the crow, mouse, and tortoise. Monkeys are fishing in the river. 11.5 x 17.5 cm. Or.MS.13934, f.23r.



11
The prince Tungala, while riding through Kanauj to his father's palace, sees the merchant's wife Lilavati. 12.0 x 17.5 cm. Or.MS.13934, f.23v.

12
The "lion" whose mane was nibbled by a mouse brings a cat from a nearby town to deal with it. 11.0 x 17.5 cm. Or.MS.13934, f.34v.

13
The king of the water-birds is restored to his fortress and his allies the land-birds fly back to their own home.
11 x 18 cm. Or.MS.13934, f.77v.

14
The king at night sees the faithful Rajput cut off his son's head and his wife present it to the goddess who demands it as the price of restoring th.e king's fortune.
11 x 17 cm. Or.MS.13934, f.59v.

stratagem to gain possession of the merchant's wife Lilavati with whom he has fallen in love, by contrast shows Dhano's urban style at its best.

The framing story of the second book, Loss of Friends, is the famous story of the jackals, Karataka and Damanaka, known in Arabic as Kalila and Dimna, who persuade the lion king to kill the bull who has become his best friend (figure 7). The "lion" is depicted as a tiger throughout. One of the most charming illustrations of the stories within this book concerns the lion, who tormented by a mouse nibbling at his mane during the night, brings back a cat from a nearby village to deal with the menace (figure 12). Dhano has painted a quiet night scene, darkening all the brilliant tones of his normal palette under a nearly black sky strewn with stars.

The frame stories of the third and fourth books, War and Peace, concern the birds of the water and the birds of the land, who act towards each other first as enemies, and then as allies: the general style of these books can be illustrated by the final picture showing the king of the water-birds safely restored to his fortress in the sea while his allies the land-birds fly back to their own home (figure 13). The most extensively illustrated of the embedded stories occurs in the third book, where the influence of the youthful patron is perhaps suggested by Dhano's dwelling for no less than five successive paintings on the story of the faithful Rajput who killed his son out of duty to his master (figure 14).

Conclusion

Very little that went on in an Indian court was for its own sake alone, and it is not difficult to construct a scenario for the decision to illustrate this particular text. The year of the manuscript's production 1761–62 was one of the worst years for Rao Raja Sardar Singh, harassed by both Jaipur and the Marathas, and indeed threatened with expulsion from the *gaddi* by his liege lord. How much better, the harassed Sardar Singh must have thought, if the Rajput states had behaved like the crow, mouse, deer, and tortoise in the Gaining of Friends, the opening book of the *Hitopadesha,* whose unity enabled them to overcome their foes. But instead they squabbled among themselves, creating dissension by setting up claimants to others' thrones, and let into Rajasthan the enemy who would nearly destroy them.

NOTE ON ILLUSTRATIONS

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SCENES OF DEVOTION AND COURT LIFE: PAINTING UNDER MAHARAO RAM SINGH OF KOTA

Joachim K. Bautze

Of no other Hara Rajput ruler have more paintings – on paper or cotton, murals, drawings, or sketches – survived than of Maharao Ram Singh of Kota. Born in 1808, he was the son of Maharao Kishor Singh's youngest brother, Prithvi Singh. Maharao Kishor Singh, Ram Singh's predecessor, had a son from the daughter of Rawat Nahar Singh of Deogarh, but that child died at the age of four. Prithvi Singh died, fighting the British under Captain James Tod, in the battle of Mangrol, on October 2, 1821, after he was found, mortally wounded, by a trooper of Skinner's Horse. Kishor Singh then cared for Ram Singh, who became the Maharao of Kota after Maharao Kishor Singh's death, during the monsoon season of 1827.

Ram Singh's life as Maharao was very well documented by his artists, and, in fact, they sketched and painted almost nothing but the Rao's great variety of outdoor and indoor pastimes, including hunting, travel, worship, receptions, processions, marriages (he married at least eight times), scenes of daily life, depictions of his contemporaries, and humorous scenes. No series of *ragamala*, *Rasikapriya*, *Barahmasa*, *Bhagavata Purana*, or other such texts of the then prevalent classical literature were illustrated for the Maharao. Apparently the only texts illustrated during his reign are of a religious connotation, as will be shown below.

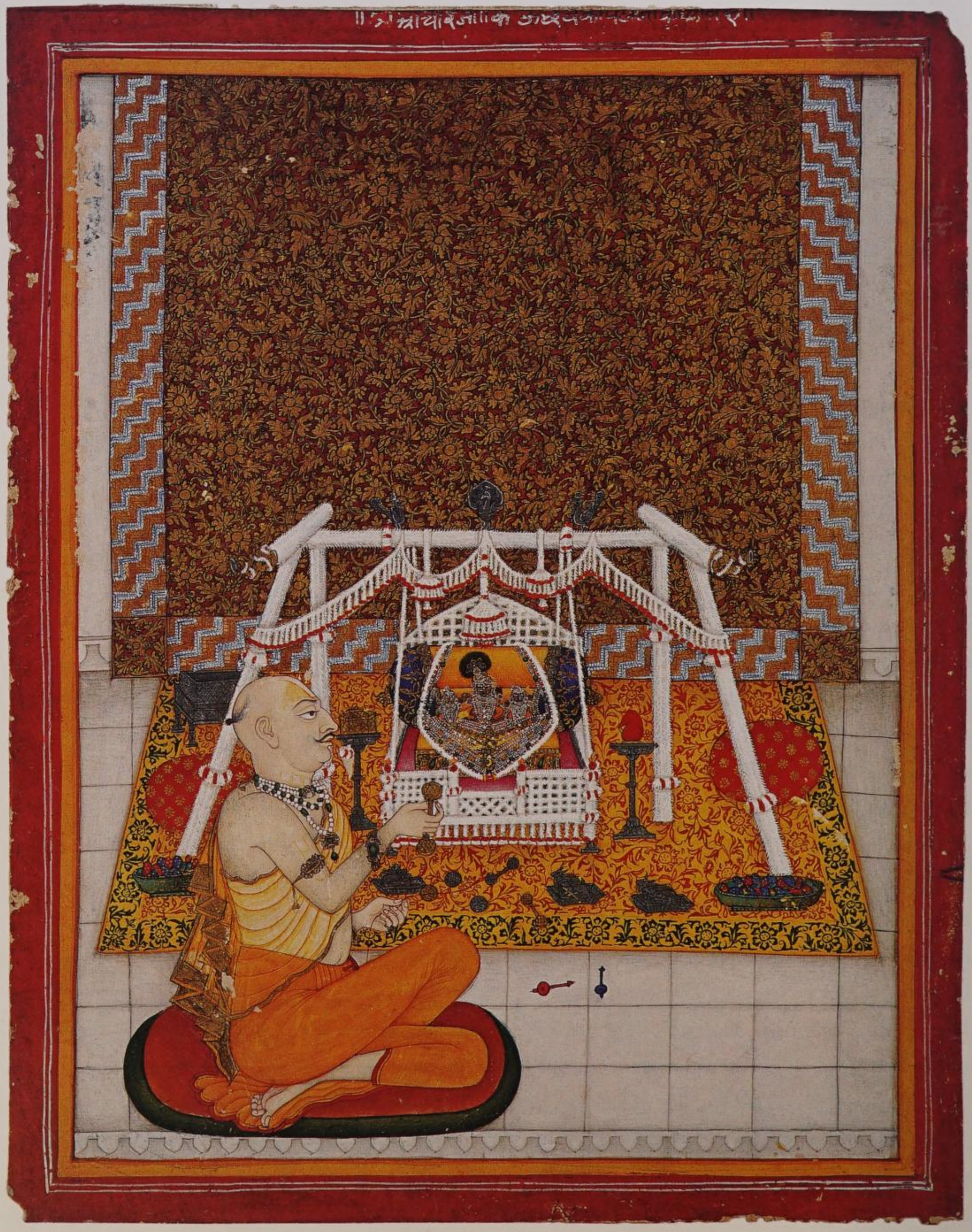
Artists Working for the Maharao

The Maharao's chief artists were Kishan Das, his son Lachhi Ram, and Lachhi Ram's son, Mana Lal. It is possible that Lachhi Ram had another son, Yara or Sara Chatera, as his name appears on a drawing of Durga killing the buffalo demon with the date VS 1924, Asoj Sudi (September–October 1867), but as Maharao Ram Singh died in March 1866, it is uncertain whether he was already in the Maharao's employ. An artist probably not related to Kishan Das is Pannalal, of whom so far, however, only one painting is known.

Paintings of the *Singar*s of Brijnathji and Brijrayji

One of the earliest dated miniature paintings depicting Maharao Ram Singh shows him during the evening puja (religious ceremony) of Brijnathji, the tutelary deity of Kota since 1719, in a work dated 1831. This painting belongs to a set which minutely illustrates the *singar*s or decorative setting for the gods at the time of festivals, called *uchhav*, in the white Nagari inscriptions at the top of the painting in the red lacquered margin. The set illustrates the *singar*s of both the tutelary deity of Kota state and Brijrayji, the "personal" deity of Maharao Kishor Singh. Most of the paintings belonging to this set illustrate the image of Brijrayji and mention the exact date when the particular festival

1
Singar and worship of Brijrayji on the occasion of the *hidolabijaya* in the month of Bhadon (from a series of the *singar*s of Brijnathji and Brijrayji). Kota, circa 1831. Opaque watercolour, gold and silver on paper; 24.4 x 19.7 cm. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, 1966.231. Photograph: Ashmolean Museum.



should be celebrated. A good number of leaves are in the Madho Singh Museum Trust, Kota, with further examples at the Central Museum, Jaipur, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, the Fondation Custodia, Paris, and several private collections in the USA, Europe, and India.

Figure 1 illustrates one of these *uchhavs* with Brijrayji and his two consorts placed on a swing decorated with jasmine. Although the identifying white Nagari inscription on top is cropped, the painting almost certainly illustrates the *hidolabijaya* (*hindolabijaya*) or swing-festival, celebrated, according to the dated sketches available, on the sixth of the bright fortnight of the month Bhadon (August–September; according to some manuscripts, it should be celebrated on the third of the dark half of Bhadon). Brijrayji sits in the centre of the swing, with a consort on either side. The *banta* (left, the golden *pan* box) and *jhari* (right, the ewer) covered by a red cloth, are seen on *padadhis* (stands) specially designed for these ritual objects. It has been suggested that the priest kneeling in front of the deity with a rattle in his right hand, and in his left the red string that keeps the swing in motion, may be identified with Maharao Kishor Singh, Ram Singh's predecessor. Should this identification be correct, all portraits of Kishor Singh would be posthumous, and one would have to ask why, on the one hand, Ram Singh appears as he actually must have looked in 1831 (compare figure 12), while on the other, Kishor Singh appears as he must have looked quite a few years earlier.

Figure 2 helps to explain what determined the artist's choice of the frame of figure 1. It shows Brijrayji on a *simhasana* (throne) with the *sirhi* (steps leading to the throne) placed to the deity's left below, as seen through the two open door-wings of the shrine. The golden embroidered *pichhvai* of figure 1 hangs in the same position in our figure 2, the marble tiles of the floor, rectangular today but square in figure 1, and the frieze at the bottom of figure 1 appear identically in figure 2, though outside the actual shrine. The artist(s) of figure 1 and all other known paintings belonging to this set have depicted all that was visible from the threshold of the entrance to the shrine, which could not be entered by any artist unless he was the priest or ruler himself. The priest in figure 2 holds the

2 *Arati* in the shrine of Brijrayji, Kota fort, January, 1989. Photograph: J.K. Bautze.

lamp for the *arati*, as does his predecessor who is shown in practically all other paintings belonging to that series. A comparison of figures 1 and 2 shows that the actual doorframe influenced the artist's choice of the extent of the painted area. In other paintings it will become more evident that the viewer actually witnesses the depicted scene through a doorframe.

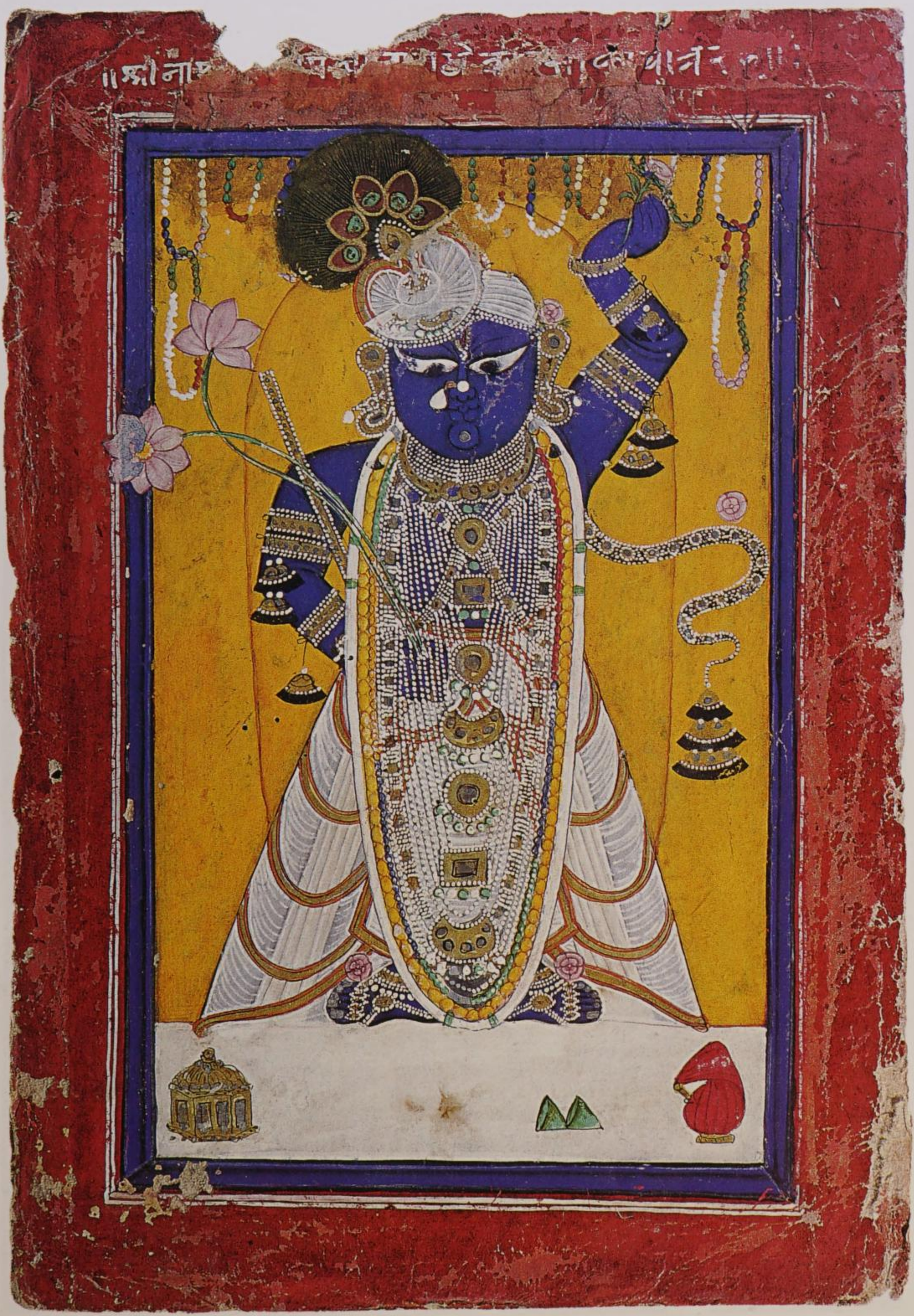
Paintings of Shrinathji and his *Singars*

Brijnathji and Brijrayji are venerated within the fort of Kota, whereas the idol of Shrinathji is worshipped in Nathdwara, Mewar. All three are worshipped by the Vallabha Sampradaya (sect). Shrinathji, however, is the most important idol of the Vallabha Sampradaya and it is hence no surprise that several sets of miniatures illustrating the *singar*s of the *uchhav*s of Shrinathji were produced. One such painting (figure 3) illustrates the *singar* of Shrinathji on the occasion of the *pavitra uchhav* which is celebrated on the eleventh day of the dark fortnight of the month Savan. Typical for the *singar* of this *uchhav,* which is also known as *pavitra ekadashi,* are the yellow *thata vastra,* the flower garlands hanging from above, and the full *chandrika* (the peacock feathers decorating Shrinathji's headdress). The *banta* and the *jhari* are placed in front of him, as in all his depictions. Paintings from the two sets known to us are dispersed all over the world, with the greatest holding in the Bara Mahal within Kota fort, where many are seen under glass.

Shrinathji was not only the major idol of a cult, he was and still is considered a living being with a daily routine. Shrinathji eats, drinks, sleeps, dances, and does almost all the things most human beings do. Like any Rajasthani ruler he also rides a horse, as demonstrated here by figure 4. He sits on a white, prancing stallion facing right, his face in full profile being surrounded by a halo with golden, shining rim. His left hand does not lift up Mount Govardhan, as in his actual image or in figure 3, but points here to his earthly home, the haveli of Nathdwara, recognizable in the top right corner by the *dhvaja* or flag, the *sudarshana chakra* (next to the flag, the disc-like weapon of Lord Vishnu), and the red *kalasha* (vase-like pot) on which the *sudarshana chakra* rests. The cows, to which Shrinathji's left forefinger also points, allude to his mythological earthly home, Gokula. The peacocks, in the same direction, allude to many of Shrinathji's/Krishna's names, like *morapriya,* "the one loved by peacocks". As in figure 3, Shrinathji's right hand holds the lotus and the flute, and he also wears the *vesar,* the nose-ring with the pear-shaped pearl. The running lady behind him not only carries the *morchhal* or fan made of peacock feathers, but also the *jhari,* whereas the lady to his right holds the *banta* in addition to the *morchhal.* Since Shrinathji in this painting so much resembles Maharao Ram Singh in the majority of his equestrian portraits, it is small wonder that this painting was considered to represent a Rajasthani ruler when still in the Heeramaneck collection several years ago.

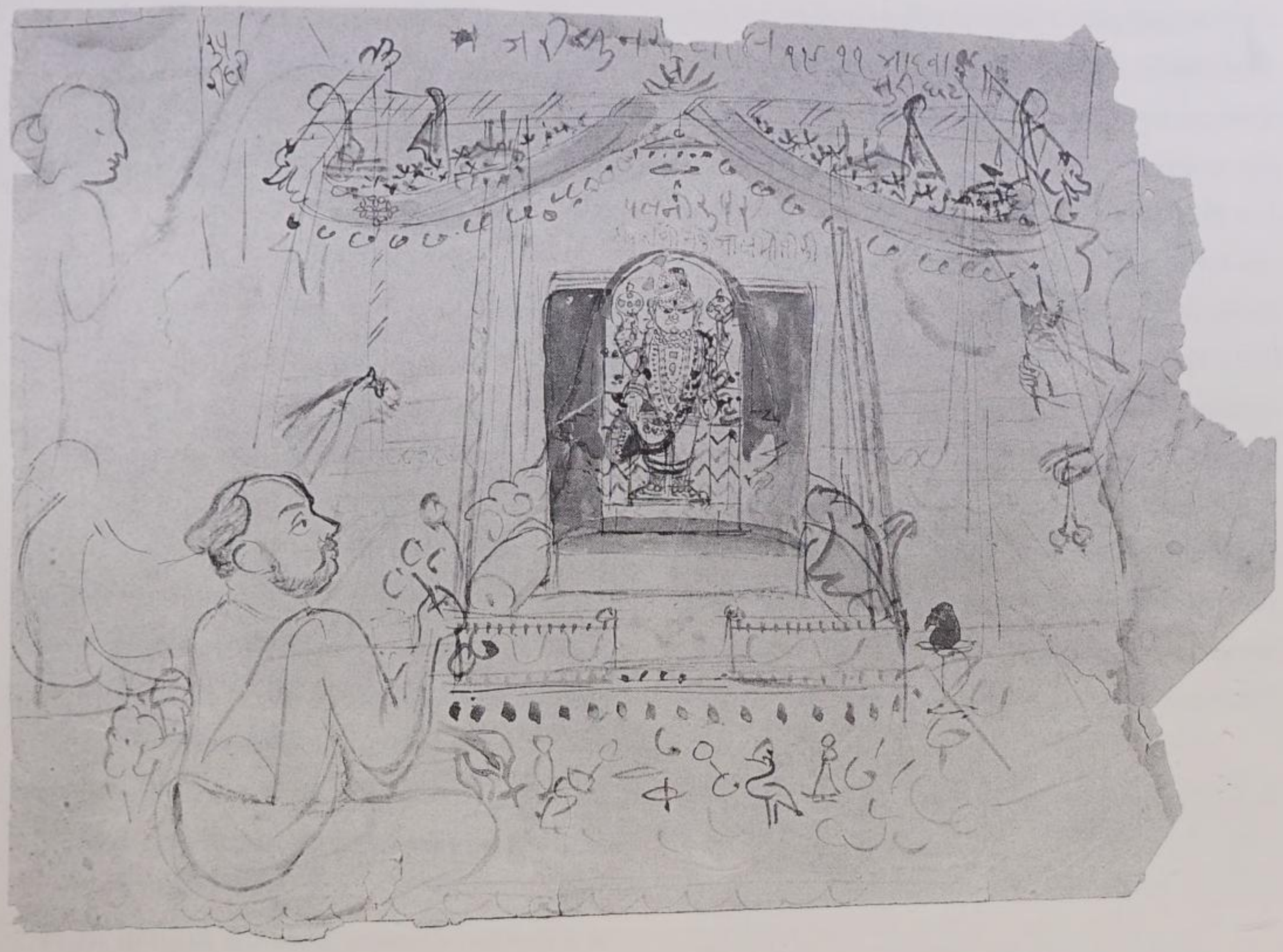
Paintings and Drawings of Mathureshji or Mathuradhish and His Priest

Mathureshji is one of the most important *svarupa*s of the Vallabhacharya Sampradaya. The idol was given by Vitthalnath, Vallabhacharya's second son, to his eldest son Girdharji and it is now worshipped in the old Kota town, not far from the fort. Mathureshji looks like a Vishnu stele with a lotus in the upper right, the club (*gada*) in the upper left, the conch (*shankha*) in the lower right, and the disc (*chakra*) in the lower left hand. Of Mathureshji, fewer Kota paintings from Maharao Ram Singh's period have survived than of Brijrayji or Shrinathji, except for a number of dated drawings, two of which are illustrated here in connection with figure 1.



3
Singar of Shrinathji on the occasion of the *pavitra uchhav* (from a series of the *singar*s of Shrinathji). Kota, circa 1840. Opaque watercolour and gold on paper; folio: 25.5 x 17.5 cm. Private collection. Photograph: J.K. Bautze.

4
Shrinathji out riding (series if any, not known). Kota, circa 1850. Opaque watercolour, gold and silver on paper; folio: 30.4 x 22.5 cm. Private collection. Photograph: J.K. Bautze.



5
Singar and worship of Mathureshji on the occasion of the *hidolabijaya* in the month of Bhadon (from a series of the *singar*s of Mathureshji). Kota, 1854. Watercolour on burnished paper; leaf: 18.2 x 25.0 cm. Private collection. Photograph: J.K. Bautze.

6
Singar and worship of Mathureshji on the occasion of the *hidolabijaya* in the month of Bhadon (from a series of the *singar*s of Mathureshji). Kota, 1861. Ink and watercolour on paper; leaf: 19.5 x 19.5 cm. Private collection. Photograph: J.K. Bautze.

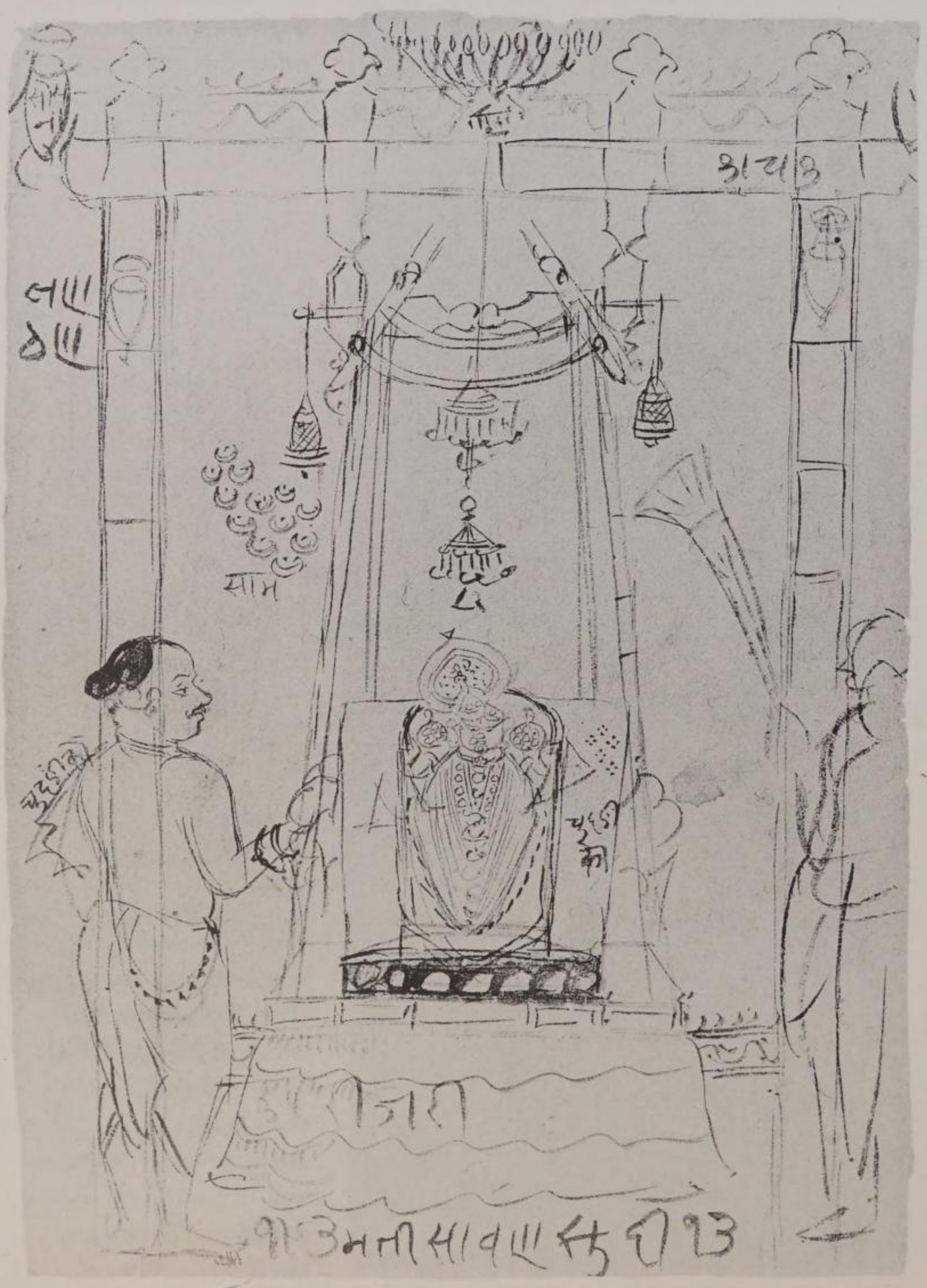
As in figure 1, figure 5 illustrates the *hidolabijaya* of Mathureshji. It is dated by inscription to the sixth of the bright fortnight of the month Bhadon, VS 1911 (1854 CE). The kneeling priest in the lower left is shown playing the rattle with his right hand and pulling the string of the swing with his left, as in figure 1.

More information is gathered from another sketch, figure 6. It is dated by inscription to the sixth of the bright fortnight of the month Bhadon, VS 1918 (1861 CE). The artist has noted more details here. The name of the kneeling priest is given as "Kaniya Lalji". According to the historian Mathuralal Sharma, "Maharaja Kanhaiyalalji" was in fact the *gosain* or priest of Mathureshji's temple. His dress should be painted "*kesar*" or saffron, exactly as his predecessor is dressed in figure 1. The *pichhvai* should have a dark red ground, also as in figure 1, etc.

Apart from the swing-festival of the month of Bhadon, there was another to be celebrated earlier, on the eleventh of the dark fortnight of the month of Sawan (July–August), according to some manuscripts. This festival is celebrated with a larger swing compared to the one used during the *hidolabijaya* of Bhadon, as is demonstrated by figure 7. The drawing is dated to the thirteenth of the bright fortnight of the month Sawan, VS 1903 (1846 CE). The priest to the left is the same as in figures 5 and 6, i.e. Maharaja Kanhaiyalalji. One inscription informs us, for example that the swing should be decorated with mirror plaques, as can be seen in a finished painting from the Brijrayji set of about 1831, now in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (1966.230) which hence also illustrates the *hidolabijaya* of Sawan.

Probably by the mid-1850s Maharaja Kanhaiyalalji not only became quite important but also quite portly, as is shown here by figure 8. His protruding belly cannot be overlooked, and his forehead seems larger due to loss of hair as he stands facing right with the idol of Mathureshji behind. At about the same time, we see him seated cross-legged facing left in a house, into which he has just admitted a visitor who sits facing the Maharaja, his palms joined in respect (figure 9). Kanhaiyalalji, dressed in a saffron coloured dhoti, wears a necklace consisting of large pearls and emeralds, in addition to a double pearl necklace with rubies set in gold. His left hand holds a preparation of *pan* while his right hand is engaged in counting the beads of an *akshamala* (a kind of rosary) within an embroidered *gomukha* (a bag, usually richly embroidered, that contains the *akshamala)*.

7
Singar and worship of Mathureshji on the occasion of the *hidolabijaya* in the month of Sawan (from a series of the *singar*s of Mathureshji). Kota, 1846. Ink on paper; leaf: 28.0 x 19.6 cm. Private collection. Photograph: J.K. Bautze.



8
Standing portrait of Maharaja Kanhaiyalalji, chief priest at the temple of Mathureshji (an individual drawing). Kota, circa 1855. Ink and watercolour on paper; 18 x 12 cm. Private collection. Photograph: J.K. Bautze.

The "Door-Frame Composition"

Figure 9 also illustrates what may be called the "door-frame composition". The viewer looks through an open door or entrance, here a fluted arch which in this case is open to the visitor below the furled red curtain with green border. The curtain is held in its position by a string, visible in the centre of the unrolled, padded cloth. The composition even contains a second architectural frame in the shape of a window, actually an exit to a balcony, through which we can see, due to the furling of another curtain, a kind of mat. Two parrots set against the blue sky are seen playing on the balustrade of the balcony and a string which keeps either an awning or another rolled curtain in position. It is uncertain whether this portrait of the Maharaja and his visitor was painted for Maharao Ram Singh or for the Maharaja himself. Be that as it may, it was painted by one of the Maharao's court artists.

A painting using an almost identical compositional scheme introduces a figure who was possibly the Maharao's barber (figure 10). The white inscription on the top red lacquered margin of the painting informs the reader that the "painting stems from the hand of the painter Pannalal" and shows "Negi Ganesh". Ganeshji, seated on a durrie and smoking a *huqqa,* displays a box of his tools in front of him. These include a pair of scissors, two razors, and a shaving-mug. As in figure 9, a mat-like curtain is furled above and held together by a centrally placed string.

A very similar device was used for the depiction of the great Maharao himself, as he sits facing right in a pavilion that, on the special occasion of the Gangaur festival, is fully bedecked with rose petals (figure 11). The inscription on the lacquered margin informs us that the garden in which the Maharao kneels with a rose in his left hand and a sword in his right is called "Rosewater garden (Gulab Bagh)". Garlands made of rose petals are also seen on the Maharao and each of his *morchhal* bearers standing behind him. The *morchhal* bearers in this painting from about 1850 appear in other paintings as well. Their names are Nathuji and Harbags, and, like the Maharao, they are faithfully portrayed.

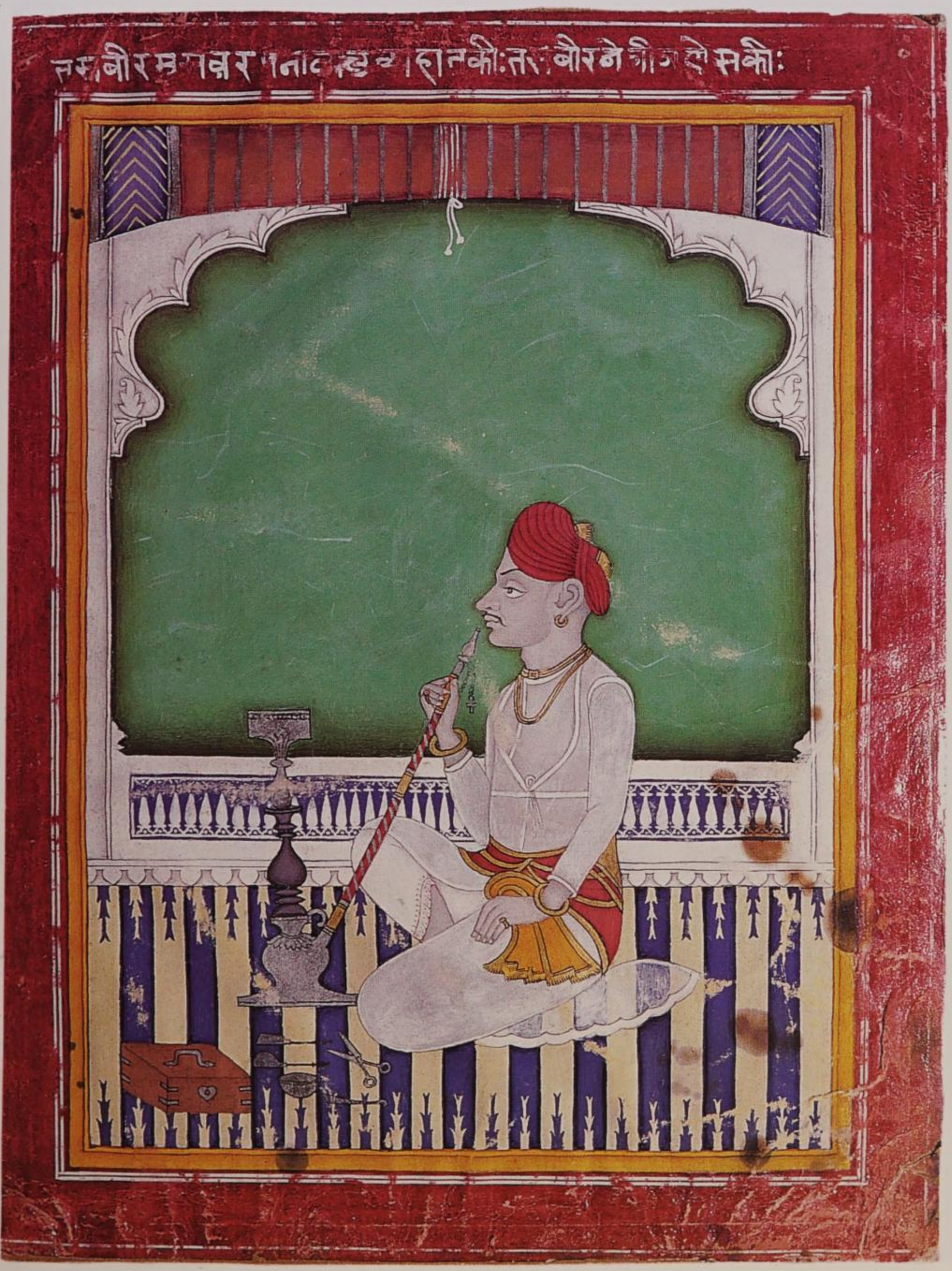
The scene is again only visible to the viewer because of the rolled mat-like curtain, a device which here more than elsewhere transforms the frame of the painting into a kind of door or window through which the spectator looks. This adds another dimension to the paintings, the artists of which cared little for the depiction of the third dimension in the Western sense.

Further Portraits of the Maharao

As already mentioned, Ram Singh's artists were kept busy in recording the Maharao's outdoor and indoor activities. Maharao Ram Singh is generally the focus of attention in the majority of compositions that include his portrait. The

9
Maharaja Kanhaiyalalji receiving a visitor (an individual painting). Kota, circa 1855. Opaque watercolour and gold on paper; folio: 28.4 x 23.0 cm. Private collection. Photograph: J.K. Bautze.

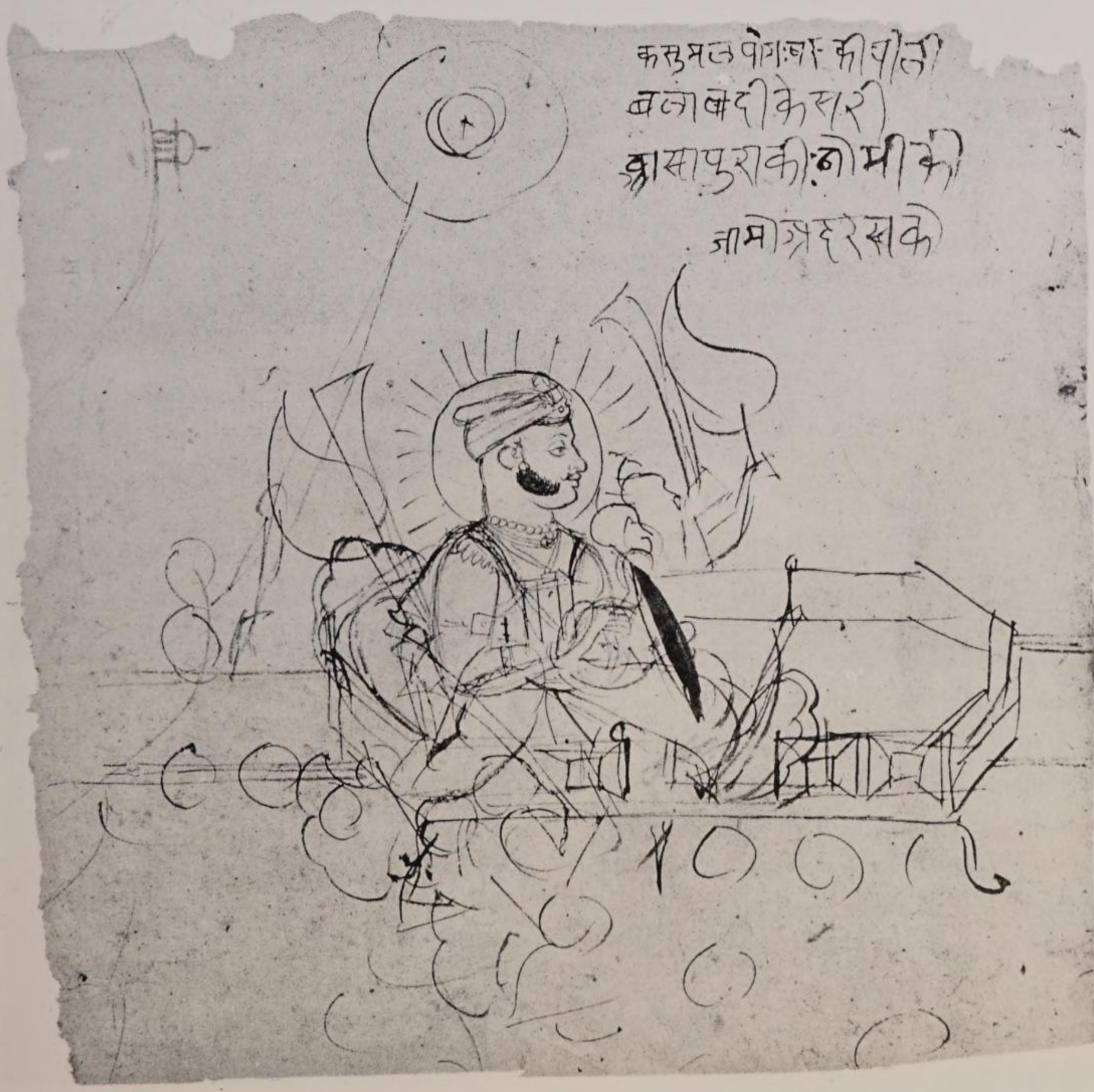
10
Ganesh, the barber of Maharao Ram Singh, by the painter Pannalal (an individual painting). Kota, circa 1860. Opaque watercolour, gold and silver on paper; folio: 23.7 x 18.5 cm. Private collection. Photograph: J.K. Bautze.



11
Maharao Ram Singh seated in the "Gulab Bagh" during the Gangaur festival (an individual painting). Kota, circa 1850. Opaque watercolour and gold on paper; folio: 33.9 x 25.3 cm; picture: 28.4 x 20.4 cm. Private collection. Photograph: J.K. Bautze.

artist first sketched him and only roughly indicated the position of the people around him, as is shown by figure 12. Their portraits were only introduced at a later stage of the production of the painting. In figure 12, Ram Singh is being carried in a palanquin. At this stage, he is the only recognizable person, with a halo framing his profile, while the palanquin and standard bearers are only indicated in outline. The facial features of the Maharao allow us to date this drawing around 1831.

In 1843 Maharao Ram Singh went to Jaisalmer to marry the daughter of Maharawal Gaj Singh of Jaisalmer. During a great darbar held on that occasion, Maharao Ram Singh met Maharaja Takhat Singh of Jodhpur, then only twenty-three years of age. The large finished painting in the Kanoria collection, Patna, that records this meeting has been published, but not however the preliminary drawing with the Maharaja and Maharao facing each other on one large *gaddi* or throne (figure 13). Both men are shown with nimbate heads because they are rulers of their states. When compared to figure 12, the Maharao's facial features have changed as a result of his age. In 1843, his side-whiskers reach down to his chin, which has become a double chin, his neck is shorter when compared to his likeness taken in 1831, his lips are protruding as if he constantly whistles, and the tip of his nose is marked by a lump resembling a large pimple.



12
Maharao Ram Singh carried in a palanquin (preparatory sketch for an individual painting). Kota, circa 1831. Ink on paper; leaf: 20.0 x 20.5 cm. Private collection. Photograph: J.K. Bautze.

How Maharao Ram Singh looked during the last years of his life can be imagined from figure 14 which shows him doing puja, probably on the occasion of his birthday, as there is an unpublished, similar sketch by the artist Lachhi Ram in the Prince of Wales Museum of Western India in Mumbai. This sketch is dated to the fourth day of the dark half of the month Kartik (October–November), 1865 (CE). Ram Singh's head is without the nimbus as when he faces the tutelary deity of the state; otherwise Ram Singh always uses that symbol of supreme royalty. His eyes look tired, his side-whiskers almost fully surround his chin, and his lips protrude more than ever. Like Kanhaiyalalji in his advanced stage of life, Ram Singh became quite fat. And like Kanhaiyalalji in figure 9, Ram Singh with his right hand counts the beads of the *akshamala* within the *gomukha*, while his left hand handles a spoon as part of the ritual which can be observed to this day.

No survey of Maharao Ram Singh's paintings would be even remotely complete without introducing one of his large outdoor scenes packed with action. Figure 15 shows him riding his horse named "Lion" as he slays a buffalo on the *chaugan* (polo-ground or arena) on the occasion of the tenth day of the Dasahra festivities on the tenth day of the bright fortnight of the month Asoj (September–October). He is the first to reach the larger of the two buffaloes and he is the first to strike, fully armed as if going to war. Several of the accompanying horsemen are equally well-armed. All of them are individually portrayed and the majority are identified by short inscriptions which in some cases reveal the estate to which the rider belongs. They include Sardar Singh of Koela, his brother Sangram Singh, Maharaja Chaturbhuj Singh of Gainta, Pratap Singhji of the Tavar family, Raja Arjun Singh, and the two foster brothers of presumably Maharao Ram Singh, Dhabhai Lalji and Dhabhai Madhoramji. On the two elephants in the background, the standard of the Kota state is displayed. They do not, however, disturb the general composition which resembles a triangle, the advancing peak of which is formed by the buffalo slain by the Maharao, who thus almost appears in the very centre of the picture. Probably dozens of individual small sketches were necessary to create such a picture.

The daily routine of a Hara ruler was nowhere better documented than in mid-nineteenth century Kota paintings. Of these, only a few have been introduced here.

13
Maharaja Takhat Singh and Maharao Ram Singh on a *gaddi* at Jaisalmer (preparatory drawing for a known individual painting). Kota, drawn at Jaisalmer, 1843. Ink and watercolour on partly stencilled paper; leaf: 13.8 x 14.9 cm. Private collection. Photograph: J.K. Bautze.

14
Maharao Ram Singh at puja, probably on the occasion of his birthday (an individual drawing). Kota, circa 1860s. Ink on burnished paper; 14.5 x 12.8 cm. Private collection. Photograph: J.K. Bautze.

15
Maharao Ram Singh and chiefs of the Kota *thikana*s out riding on the *chaugan* in order to kill buffaloes on the occasion of Dasahra (an individual painting). Kota, circa late 1850s. Opaque watercolour, gold and silver on paper; folio: 49.9 x 44.5 cm; image: 43.9 x 38.8 cm. Private collection. Photograph: J.K. Bautze.

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COURT PAINTING AND YOGIC METAPHYSICS IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY JODHPUR

Debra Diamond

In the early nineteenth century court artists at Jodhpur, capital of the powerful Rathor Rajput kingdom in the western Indian desert, developed a monumental manuscript format for metaphysical and puranic narratives. There are over five hundred paintings of this kind, from eight complete and one partial manuscript.[1] Each folio is a full-page painting on *wasli* paper, approximately 148 by 47 cm, a size unusual for Rajasthani painting and unprecedented for manuscripts. Painted by the court's leading artists, these are often superbly executed, highly burnished, and liberally adorned with silver alloy and gold. The lavish manuscripts are unaccompanied by text, except for textual summaries on some versos. Several include colophons that name the artists and record the year the manuscripts entered the *dholiya re kothar,* a royal storeroom for paintings and important state correspondence.

The monumental manuscripts produced at the court of Maharaja Man Singh (r. 1803–43) divide into two thematic groups.[2] The first group includes texts typically illustrated in Rajput courts, among them an account of the Goddess, *Durga Charitra,* and three concerning Vishnu (*Gajendra Moksha*) and his avatars Rama (*Ramayana*) and Krishna (*Rasalila*). The larger group (344 folios or 68 per cent) consists of texts rarely if ever illustrated. These recount the myths of Lord Shiva or elucidate yogic metaphysics and include the *Siddha Siddhanta Paddhati, Nath Charitra, Nath Purana, Shiva Rahasya, Shiva Purana,* and an incomplete manuscript tentatively identified by B.N. Reu as the *Megh Mala.*[3]

The Monumental and the Miniature

Rajput paintings have traditionally been characterized as miniatures, which implies delicately precise paintings small enough to be held in the hand for individual, intimate appreciation. More recently, scholars have expanded our conception of North Indian painting beyond the miniature to include larger images, such as Mewar and Kota "court history" paintings or Jodhpur processional paintings.[4] Large-scale visual documents of court rituals and contemporary events, these are characterized by their use of panoramic or bird's-eye views of local landscapes peopled with small figures.

The Jodhpur monumental manuscripts are different: they exploit the visual possibilities of a larger format by magnifying, adapting, juxtaposing, or integrating both established compositions and non-court motifs. The illustrated *Siddha Siddhanta Paddhati*'s sixth folio is paradigmatic. The artist juxtaposes an image of the universe-within-a-man (a cosmological conception broadly shared by Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist traditions), adapted

from Jain painting, with the white-walled palace-cities depicted in countless court paintings of the eighteenth century (figure 1).[5] The depiction of the macrocosm within the microcosm embodies the productive tension between the older miniature tradition and the new monumental format.

With his eyes crossed in yogic meditation and his feet resting upon a tortoise, the perfected being, or *siddha,* depicted in this folio stands against a saturated blue field. His large, round earrings indicate that he is a yogi affiliated with the Nath Sampradaya, a Shaiva sectarian order whose members are often called *kanphata* (split-eared ones) because of these ornaments worn through the cartilage of the ear. In the bliss of enlightenment, the *siddha* incorporates the vast cosmos, the deities, and all manner of creation within his body. Even his face becomes enormous: in a dramatic (and witty) inversion of scale, the sun and the moon become the *siddha*'s cheeks, clouds his beard, and mountains his ear hair.

1
The union of macrocosm and microcosm depicted as the universe within the body of a Nath yogin. Folio 6 from the illustrated *Siddha Siddhanta Paddhati.* By the "Muslim artist". Jodhpur, 1824. Opaque watercolour, gold and silver alloy on *wasli* paper; 122 x 41 cm. Photograph: Debra Diamond.

The image's power stems from the contrast between the minutely rendered universe and the gigantic body, which encompasses the fourteen worlds within its expansive and fleshy contours. Its infinitely detailed worlds, white palace-cities with perspectival walls that create the painting's only tangible spaces, offer the viewer a simultaneous and transcendent vision of the fourteen worlds as kingdoms of deities, humans, and demons. The experience of viewing the original exaggerates the divergence of scale. The highly burnished painting, liberally adorned with gold, is just over four feet high. Its surface shimmers. Light reflects off the painting's gilded surfaces so intensely that the yogic body cannot be perceived in its totality from any given viewing position, magnifying the perception of the gigantic by denying complete apprehension.

The image counterbalances the gigantic and the miniature, the esoteric and the familiar, the yogic and the courtly. Even as the monumental *siddha* incorporates the palace into his own body, the painting's refined style equates him with royal splendour. This double movement parallels the political situation during this period: Man Singh elevated the Nath Sampradaya into a political and spiritual elite who took on the prerogatives of nobility

while the Maharaja himself deployed the image of the yogi-king.[6]

Maharaja Man Singh and the Naths

Man Singh's reign (1803–43) was severely contested from its onset. Almost all of his kinsmen – the landed nobility – challenged his right to rule. Lacking their support and beleaguered by the fiscal demands of his mercenary armies and by the tribute demands of the Marathas and then the British, Man Singh brought in and raised to prominence a family of gurus with no competing loyalties. These were the Naths, a heterodox Shaiva sect, whose reputed supernatural powers enhanced their efficacy as spiritual guides, statesmen, and strongmen. Over time however, the sect's burgeoning ranks and the gurus' influence and wealth (they came to control a tenth of the state's revenues) engendered intense opposition from both noblemen and the British. At the end of his reign, Man Singh could no longer protect the Naths from their enemies. In resistance to the jailing of two priests, he chose self-imposed exile to a nearby village clearing, where he sat as a naked and ash-smeared ascetic until his death shortly thereafter.

Man Singh's lavish patronage, during a reign marked by political conflict that repeatedly threatened the throne, often served to legitimize the presence of Naths within the state structure. Whereas Man Singh consistently explained his devotion to the supradivine Jallandhar Nath as gratitude for the divine intercession that brought him to the throne, an extensive cultural programme of painting, architecture, and poetry expanded upon this original act of grace. His living gurus were depicted as Rajput nobility, and Nath *mahasiddha*s (great perfected beings) were represented in narrative hagiographies or as images for worship. Hundreds of small paintings – in which the enthroned *mahasiddha* Jallandhar Nath receives the Maharaja's homage and recognizes him with a garland (figure 2) – were produced and distributed for *chitra darshan* (picture worship). The compositional motif of the enthroned Nath and reverent ruler is a visual homologue to the Jodhpur polity symbolically ruled by Jallandhar Nath with Man Singh as his chief devotee. Painted by Shiv Das Bhatti in 1835, the style typifies Man Singh-period painting with its rhythmic geometries, flat, bright colours, and burnished surface.

2
Jallandhar Nath presents Maharaja Man Singh with a garland on Divali. By Shiv Das Bhatti. Jodhpur, 1835. Opaque watercolour, gold and silver alloy on *wasli* paper. Photograph: Rosemary Crill.

Yogic Metaphysics in the *Siddha Siddhanta Paddhati*

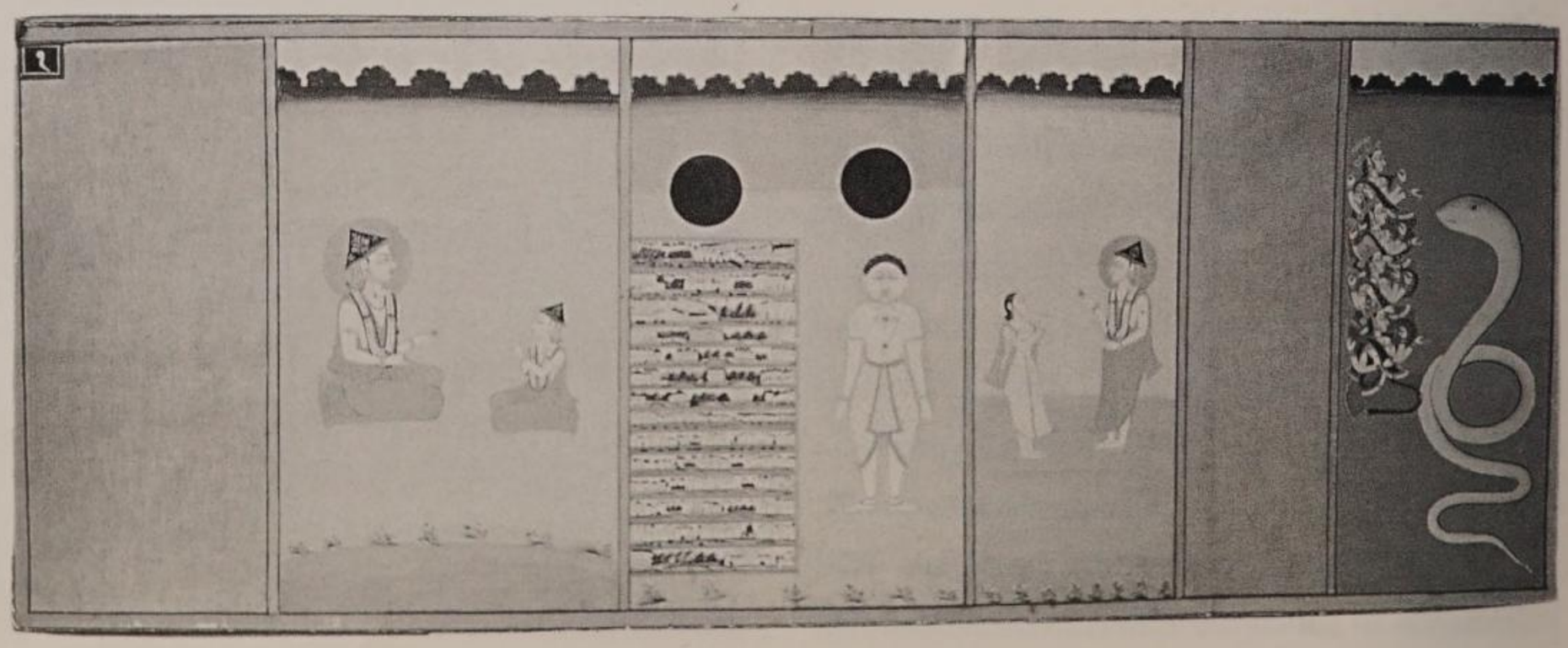
According to the colophon, "the Muslim artist prepared the complete 25 folios in 1824" of the *Siddha Siddhanta Paddhati* (lit. "The Path of the *Siddha* Doctrine", hereafter *SSP*).[7] Although the text is the most clear and systematic exposition of Nath metaphysics, its production seems a surprising choice, even within the context of Nath legitimization. While the other Nath-specific illustrated manuscripts are predominantly hagiographies of Nath *siddha*s filled with allegories of devoted kings in the local language, the *SSP* is an esoteric Sanskrit excursus on yogic means and methods.[8]

The *SSP* is attributed to Gorakhnath, a *mahasiddha* and the historical founder of the Nath Sampradaya (circa twelfth century), who developed pre-existing yoga traditions into a systematized practice for the internal transformation of humans into *siddha*s.[9] The practice, known as *hatha yoga* (the path of violent exertion) evolved out of a monist philosophical tradition in which everything – from the Supreme Absolute to the lowest forms of inert matter – is understood to be one and the same. This essential sameness allows the yogic practitioner to transmute his gross body and mind (through a rigorous programme of breathing exercises, fixed postures, and meditation) into ever more subtle layers of being in which he transcends matter (thus gaining supernatural powers), time (thus becoming immortal), and space.[10] The practice culminates in the perfected (i.e. transubstantiated) yogin's blissful awareness (*samadhi*) of the universe within himself and all beings.

In broad outline, the *SSP* explicates a cosmology, *hatha yogic* techniques, the importance of the guru in transmission, and the Sampradaya's place within Indian religious traditions. The illustrated manuscript, which contains twenty-five folios, highlights or downplays some portions of the text; it also interpolates images.[11] The cycle of six illustrations for the text's opening chapter on the creation of the universe reveals the process by which court artists generated images for this previously unillustrated text and responded to the challenge of the larger format.

The Supreme Absolute and the Blissful

In the first chapter, Gorakhnath explains the eternal, non-differentiated, formless Supreme Absolute and its simultaneous phenomenal manifestations as a sequence of unfoldings for the sake of ordinary (i.e. unenlightened) humans. Corresponding to the text's verse order, horizontal folios are divided into distinct panels that convert essentially iconic images into narrative sequences. These are



3
Gorakhnath explains the nature of the universe. Folio 1 from the illustrated *Siddha Siddhanta Paddhati*. By the "Muslim artist". Jodhpur, 1824. Opaque watercolour, gold and silver alloy on *wasli* paper; 41 x 122 cm. Photograph: Debra Diamond. See text for detailed description.

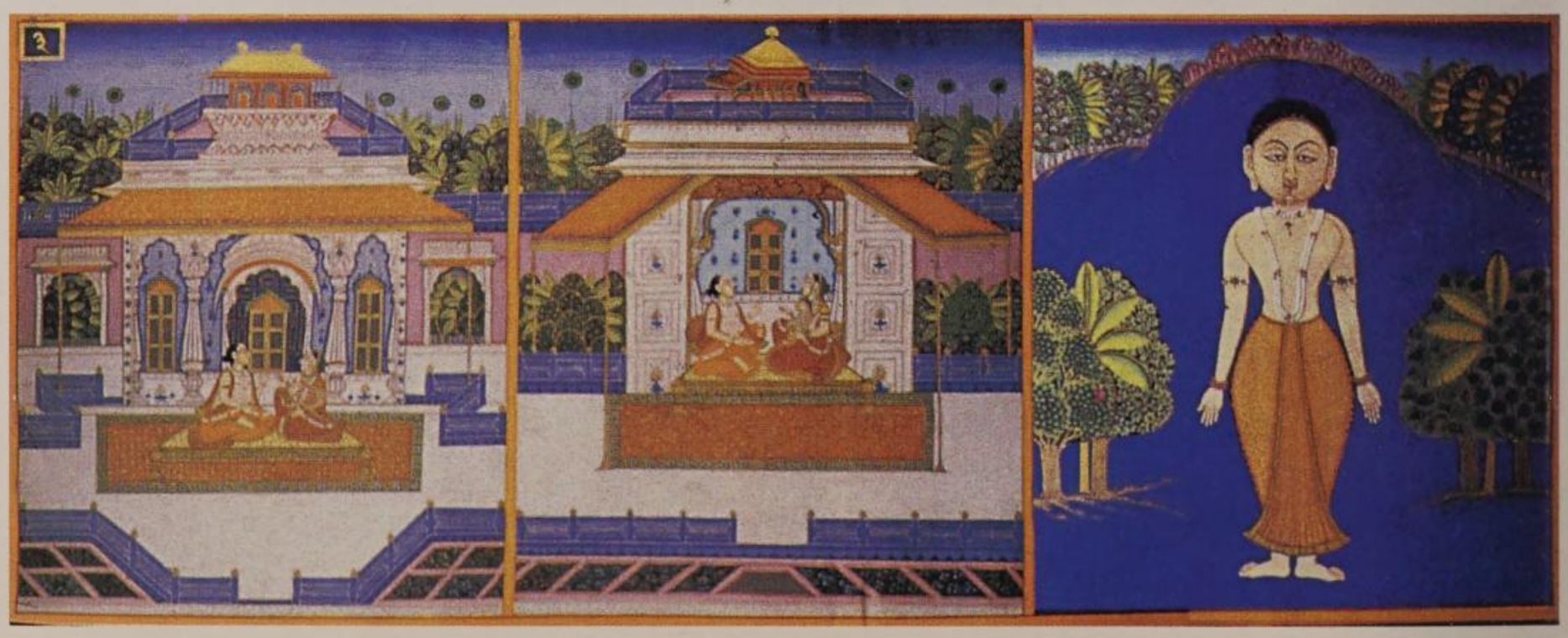
4
Cosmic man *(loka purusha)*.
Bikaner, circa 1775. Opaque watercolour on cloth;
132.1 x 63.5 cm. Courtesy of the Paul F. Walter collection.

punctuated by full-page vertical images of Nath *siddhas*.

The narrative sequence begins (figure 3, folio 1a) with a solid gold field representing the Supreme Absolute. Its subsequent panels combine Jodhpur court-painting conventions with popular motifs. Flanked by panels that depict the teaching Gorakhnath (folios 1b and 1d), the central image depicts the universe and the body – the core of Nath teachings – in potential (black circles) and manifest forms, through schematic conventions adapted from cosmological treatises, the best-known of which come from Jain temple libraries. If we compare an eighteenth-century Jain representation (figure 4) of the universe-within-a-man (*loka purusha*) to monumental folio 1c (figure 3), we can see that the Jodhpur artist has adopted the Jain conception of the fourteen worlds as a grid of horizontal registers. The adjacent body, with its rounded, almost bulbous chest, circular head, and calligraphic contours again refers us to Jain archetypes and an earlier regional idiom known as the Western Indian style. In the final part of the folio, energy (*shakti*) separates from the Absolute in five stages.

Placed against the celadon ground typical in Jodhpur portraits, these motifs are literally reframed in the idiom of the court. The reference to the most common of court genres is explicit in the first folio's three central panels (figure 3, folio 1b, 1c, and 1d): a strip of scalloped clouds at the top border and a tufted hillock at the bottom are ubiquitous portrait conventions. Iconographically, folios 1b and 1d may be read as portraits of Gorakhnath; in the former, he teaches his Nath disciple in an ambiguous transcendent space above the grassy strip, but then descends fully into the portrait landscape in the latter representation to teach the layman. Precisely because this iconography is dependent on visual conventions familiar to a court audience, it incorporates Gorakhnath and his teachings into the representational space of royal authority.

The adaptation of court motifs continues in the third folio (figure 5), which depicts the matter-body (*prakriti-pinda*, of which every individual body is a particularized manifestation) born from the union of male and female principles. The artist has represented these abstract but gendered essences as a royal couple in an elaborate pavilion. Garbed in gold-embroidered textiles and elaborate jewels, they are the hero and heroine (*nayaka* and *nayika*) seen in countless court paintings illustrating poetic texts (such as the *Rasikapriya* and *Barahmasa*) or depicting the nobility. The workshop practice of tracing, which makes them a stock romantic motif, also allows their transposition into a different, spiritual context, albeit one in



5
The male and female principles produce the individual body. Folio 3 from the illustrated *Siddha Siddhanta Paddhati*. By the "Muslim artist". Jodhpur, 1824. Opaque watercolour, gold and silver alloy on *wasli* paper; 41 x 122 cm. Photograph: Rosemary Crill.

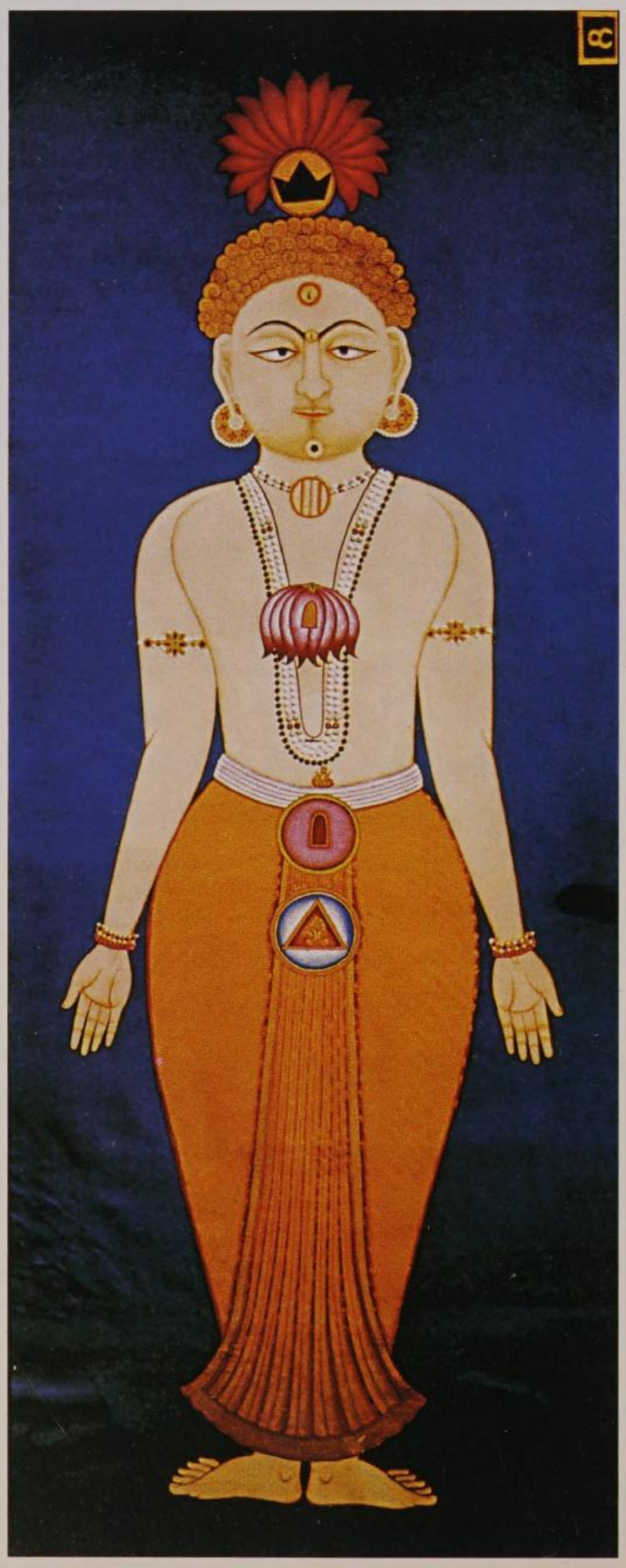
5a
Detail of figure 5.
Photograph: Debra Diamond.

which the sublime matter-body is sweetly domesticated into an infant in its mother's arms (figure 5a).

The iconic representation of the matter-body in the third panel dramatically interrupts the temporal sequence and naturalistic space of the first two panels: the flatly painted figure stands in rigid yogic posture against a flat blue ground. Lollipop trees and a curved hillock crowned by diminutive pink mountains signify landscape but function as a symmetrical frame; as they reiterate the curves of the yogi's hips and spiral curls of his hair, they dematerialize his body through rhythmic, decorative abstraction.

Gorakhnath's text explains the constitution of the body in great detail, for such knowledge is essential to yogic awareness.[12] A yogin must learn how to reverse the outward and downward emanation of the Supreme Absolute by manipulating his physical and his subtle body, the spiritual interface with the cosmos. He inverts the natural tendency towards devolution (for the individual this takes the form of decay and death) by raising the primal energy (*kundalini shakti*), which lies coiled at the base of the spine, upwards through the body along stations called *chakra*s (lit. wheels). The *chakra*s are depicted in the monumental fourth folio (figure 6). Here, the artist cites iconographic sources from non-court traditions. Yoga treatises sometimes included schematic depictions of the body's *chakra*s.

Courtiers had collected one such manuscript from a Shaiva priest and presented it to Maharaja Man Singh, who stored it in his library. Casually limned and lightly coloured with watercolour washes, it is an example of the type of imagery to which court artists had recourse as well as where they might have encountered it.[13] Its transformation into the refined court aesthetic is marked by the folio's glowing jewel tones and delicate shading.



6
The *chakra*s of the yogic body. Folio 4 from the illustrated *Siddha Siddhanta Paddhati*. By the "Muslim artist". Jodhpur, 1824. Opaque watercolour, gold and silver alloy on *wasli* paper; 122 x 41 cm. Photograph: Debra Diamond.

In the opening sequence of the *SSP*, the artist visualizes the yogic body's importance within *hatha yogic* practice through scale and orientation (from horizontal to vertical). The syncopated recurrence of the yogic body from its minuscule appearance in the first folio (figure 3, folio 1c), magnification in the third folio (figure 5, folio 3c), full extension in the fourth folio (figure 6), and its awesome manifestation (appearing greater through the contrast of scale to the interior worlds) in the sixth folio (figure 1), create an internal rhythm within the pictorial cycle. The "Muslim artist" deployed a stock motif in an innovative way, tightly constructing the cosmology cycle to culminate in an image of a Nath *siddha* evincing a wondrous power.

Viewing the Monumental Manuscripts

The Nath-related manuscripts visually manifest Man Singh's continued support of the order during the contentious years between 1822 and 1828. For much of this period, the majority of nobles were in exile, while two Nath gurus vying for supremacy drew the remaining courtiers into opposing factions. The Nath manuscripts, which celebrate the order's metaphysical and hagiographic traditions and pictorially combine yogic and courtly imagery, work to integrate the factions within the Jodhpur court.

Although evidence of the way the monumental manuscript folios were presented has yet to be uncovered, their size presupposes collective viewing, if only because the rather cumbersome folios are too large for individual lifting and viewing. Within the highly coded space of the court, all collective activities function as rituals that reiterate hierarchies and bonds of loyalty. Thus, collective viewing of visual narratives would have served to effect (at least the appearance of) consensus, as well as to entertain and instruct.[14] This suggests monumental painting functioned as a tool of statecraft.

7
Krishna kills the demon Vyomasura. Folio 26 from an illustrated *Bhagavata Purana*. Jodhpur, last quarter of the eighteenth century. Opaque watercolour on paper backed with cloth; 48 x 70 cm. Photograph: Rosemary Crill. See text for detailed description.

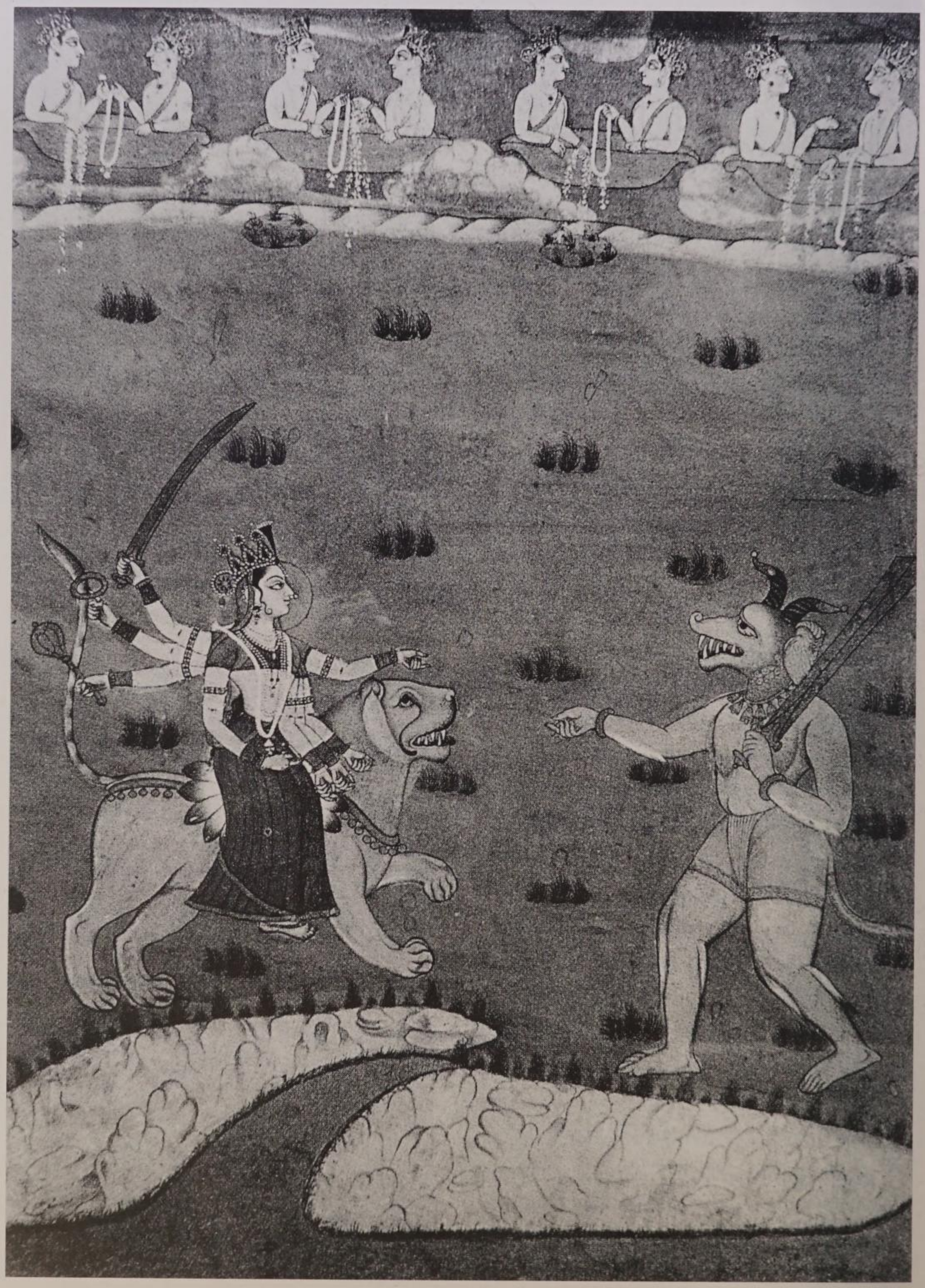
Artistic Responses to Scale in Other Monumental Manuscripts

The large format that propelled the manuscripts into the public display of the politically charged court also provided artists with the opportunity to experiment with scale and composition. Although those monumental manuscripts that had been previously illustrated in smaller format drew more consistently on motifs and compositions developed in the court visual traditions, all are stylistically heterogeneous. Nonetheless, each has its own palette and a dominant mode of responses to the expanded format. A look at two of these manuscripts, as well as at a precursor created in the reign of Man Singh's grandfather, Maharaja Bijay Singh (r. 1752–93), gives some indication of the range of responses to the larger format.

A relatively large *Bhagavata Purana*, dated by style to the late eighteenth century, marks the transition between conventional illustrated narratives and the monumental manuscripts. Its artists magnified certain elements while leaving other elements quite small. The aqueous blue-green palette and improbably large trees of this folio evoke a lushly magical landscape where a diminutive Krishna frolics and fights demons (figure 7). The artist uses the tree trunks to separate consecutive events: in the upper left corner, the sage Narada informs Krishna of his uncle Kamsa's evil intentions; in the lower register from left to right, Krishna plays blind man's buff with the cowherd boys, the demon Vyomasura kidnaps two boys as Krishna gives chase, Krishna kills the demon, Krishna releases the boys imprisoned in a cave.

The artists of the *Durga Charitra* most often simply – but powerfully – magnify entire compositions. Painted in the subtle palette of muted greens and deep pinks seen in Marwar painting as early as the Pali *Ragamala* (dated 1623), the effect is one of accomplished grandeur and quiet majesty (figure 8). In contrast, artists who worked on the *Ramayana* folios created an air of great panoply by multiplying the number of small figures to fill up the large folio. In folio 74, for example,

8
Detail from the illustrated *Durga Charitra*. Jodhpur, first quarter of the nineteenth century. Opaque watercolour on *wasli* paper; 128 x 48 cm.



9
The armies of Lord Rama and the demon Ravana clash. Folio 74 from an illustrated *Ramayana*. Jodhpur, first quarter of the nineteenth century. Opaque watercolour, gold and silver alloy on *wasli* paper; 62.7 x 134.5 cm. Photograph: Bharath Ramamrutham.

Rama's monkey soldiers clash with hordes of demons on a colossal battlefield (figure 9). The exuberant action is underscored by freely painted sections such as the spiralling snail-shell clouds, a motif that is typically rendered in a flat decorative manner in contemporaneous Jodhpur painting.

Conclusion

Painting of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is often denigrated for a banal recycling of timeless themes. Yet the Man Singh-period monumental manuscripts attest that further study of this relatively neglected period is overdue. In response to commissions of unprecedented size and new themes, Jodhpur court artists innovated compositions based on the adaptation of pre-existing motifs. Those solutions, as well as the incorporation of motifs from non-court traditions, are indicative of the flexibility of the workshop tradition based on tracing practices. They demonstrate the process by which artists developed new imagery in a tradition typically understood as innately conservative.

FIGURE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Figures 1–3, 5–9 reproduced courtesy of the Mehrangarh Fort Trust, Jodhpur.

NOTES

1. This collection of manuscripts remains remarkably intact and in excellent condition today; it is now housed in the Umaid Bhavan Palace, Jodhpur. I wish to express my profound gratitude to Maharaja Gaj Singhji who graciously made these paintings available for study. I also wish to sincerely thank the Mehrangarh Fort Trust, and most especially Mahendra Singhji, Nahar Singhji, Anand Singhji, and Raju Singhji, who generously assisted my research, with a separate word of acknowledgement to the erudite Fort Museum curator, Dr Naval Krishna. Finally, I wish to acknowledge Robert Skelton and Rosemary Crill for their scholarship and support with this project.
2. I do not include in this group three important but smaller manuscripts produced in the Man Singh period. These are the dynastic history *Suraj Prakash* (70 folios), the *Panchatantra* fables (over 400 folios), and the Marwar love story, *Dhola Maru* (121 folios). They are discussed more fully in Rosemary Crill, *Marwar Painting: A History of the Jodhpur Style*, Mumbai, 1999.
3. *Nath Charitra ki Katha*, Jodhpur, 1937, p. 2.
4. Andrew Topsfield, *The City Palace Museum, Udaipur: Paintings of Mewar Court Life*, Ahmedabad, 1990, passim; Woodman Lyon Taylor, *Visual Culture in Performative Practice: The Aesthetics, Politics and Poetics of Visuality in Liturgical Practices of the Vallabha Sampradaya Hindu Community at Kota*, PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 1997, especially pp. 213-18. Large Jodhpur processions were also produced during Man Singh's reign. See *Maggs*

Bulletin, December 1985, no. 39 and *Sotheby's*, October 28, 1991, lot 38.

5. A Jain source, rather than a shared archetype, seems particularly likely because the Nath *siddha* has the short, spiral curls of a *jina* rather than the long *jata* (dreadlocks) that are depicted in every other Jodhpur painting of Naths from this period, including a similarly large yogic body in the *Nath Charitra*, folio 3.

6. Daniel Gold, "The Instability of the King: Magical Insanity and the Yogi's Power in the Politics of Jodhpur, 1803–1843", in David Lorenzen, ed., *Bhakti Religion in North India: Community Identity and Political Action*, Albany, New York, 1995, pp. 120-32.

7. *Chitara musalman tayi kina jumla pana 25.* Differences in style and quality indicate that several artists worked on the manuscript; the "Muslim artist" was apparently the painter of many of the folios as well as the manuscript's supervisor, a contention strengthened by the unusual library ascription *tayi kina* (prepared by). More commonly used terms indicate the hand of the artist. The identification of the artist as Muslim is not paradoxical. Muslim artists played a significant role in Rajput (Hindu) courts and, as is typical of artistic production in South Asia, sectarian differences play no part in painting commissions. It can also be noted that Nathism is not an exclusively Hindu phenomenon. In northwest India, Naths often had Hindu-Muslim identities and devotees were drawn from both communities.

8. Kallyani Mallik, *Siddha Siddhanta Paddhati and Other Works of Nath Yogis*, Poona, 1954.

9. David Gordon White, *The Alchemical Body: Siddha Traditions in Medieval India*, Chicago, 1996, p. 99.

10. *Hatha yoga* is widely known today, in simplified form, as a system of fixed postures. Its fuller practice is oriented towards raising the *kundalini shakti* for the purposes of immortality, magical power, and enlightenment.

11. The latter strategy results in the inclusion of images of religious traditions important within the fabric of nineteenth-century Jodhpur, to wit, Islam (folio 21) and the Vallabha Sampradaya (folio 18).

12. *SSP* verse II.31: If a yogin does not fully apprehend the nine *chakra*s, sixteen *adhara*s, three *lakshaya*s, and five *vyoma*s, he only bears the name of yogin.

13. Man Singh started the Pustak Prakash Library in 1831 to house the many manuscripts he collected, including this document labelled *Adinath Virat Svarup* (Adinath in the form of the universe), which was presented to the Maharaja by Akheram, n.d.: Pustak Prakash Library 1450.1283, Mehrangarh Fort, Jodhpur.

14. From the first year of his reign, Man Singh instructed the court to listen to his guru's teachings. When a nobleman refused because of his Vaishnava faith, the Maharaja told him that public compliance (as opposed to personal allegiance) was mandatory: "Then hear it even while your heart does not accept it." *Tawarikh Mansingh* manuscript at Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner, p. 96; quoted in Gold, op. cit., p. 128.

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